

ARTHUR M. ECKSTEIN

Mediterranean
Anarchy,
Interstate War,
AND THE
Rise of Rome

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Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome

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In honor of beloved Virgil—

“O degli altri poeti onore e lume . . .”

—Dante, *Inferno*

Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome

Arthur M. Eckstein

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For Erich

Moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque
Ennius

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Abbreviations

Since this book is aimed simultaneously at two separate scholarly communities, both at modern historians of the ancient world and at political scientists, it is necessary here to introduce both communities to the abbreviations by which the most important scholarly journals in each field are known. In addition, most political scientists are unfamiliar with all but the most famous ancient writers, so I have included explanations for the abbreviations by which these writers are known among scholars of the ancient world (along with brief descriptions of who these writers were).

JOURNALS

<i>ABSA</i>	<i>Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
<i>AC</i>	<i>Acta Classica</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AJAH</i>	<i>American Journal of Ancient History</i>
<i>AJPh</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>AK</i>	<i>Archiv für Kulturgeschichte</i>
<i>Anc. Soc.</i>	<i>Ancient Society</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>

APSR	<i>American Political Science Review</i>
AW	<i>Ancient World</i>
CA	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
CB	<i>Classical Bulletin</i>
CHJ	<i>Cambridge Historical Journal</i>
<i>Chron. Eg.</i>	<i>Chronique d’Egypte</i>
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>Class. et Med.</i>	<i>Classical et Medievalia</i>
CPh	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
CSCA	<i>California Studies in Classical Antiquity</i>
DHA	<i>Dialogues d’Histoire Ancienne</i>
<i>Ep. Anat.</i>	<i>Epigraphica Anatolica</i>
G&R	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
HTbR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HZ	<i>Historisches Zeitschrift</i>
<i>Int. Hist. Rev.</i>	<i>International History Review</i>
<i>Int. Org.</i>	<i>International Organization</i>
<i>Int. Sec.</i>	<i>International Security</i>
<i>Int. Studies Quart.</i>	<i>International Studies Quarterly</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>Journ. Conflict Res.</i>	<i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i>
<i>Journ. Interdisc. Hist.</i>	<i>Journal of Interdisciplinary History</i>
<i>Journ. Peace Research</i>	<i>Journal of Peace Research</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>

<i>JWSR</i>	<i>Journal of World-Systems Research</i>
<i>LCM</i>	<i>Liverpool Classical Monthly</i>
<i>Med. Ant.</i>	<i>Mediterranean Antiquity</i>
<i>MEFR</i>	<i>Melanges d'École Française de Rome</i>
<i>Quad. Urb.</i>	<i>Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica</i>
<i>PCPhS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>Poli. Sci. Quart.</i>	<i>Political Science Quarterly</i>
<i>REG</i>	<i>Revue des Études Grecques</i>
<i>RFIC</i>	<i>Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica</i>
<i>Rev. Int. Studies</i>	<i>Review of International Studies</i>
<i>SCI</i>	<i>Scripta Classical Israelica</i>
<i>SCO</i>	<i>Studi Classici e Orientali</i>
<i>Sec. Studies</i>	<i>Security Studies</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>YCS</i>	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

ANCIENT SOURCES

<i>Ael. VH</i>	Aelian (essayist, ca. 200 A.D.), <i>Varia Historia</i>
<i>Aen. Tact.</i>	Aeneas Tacticus (Greek military writer, ca. 350 B.C.)
<i>Anth. Pal.</i>	<i>Anthologia Palatina</i> (collection of Greek poetry)
<i>App. Pun.</i>	Appian (historian, ca. 130 A.D.), <i>Punic Wars</i>
<i>App. Sam.</i>	Appian, <i>Samnite Wars</i>
<i>App. Syr.</i>	Appian, <i>Syrian Wars</i>
<i>Ar.</i>	Aristophanes (Athenian comic playwright, ca. 420 B.C.)

Arist. <i>Pol.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i> (ca. 340 B.C.)
Arist. <i>Rhet.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Rhetoric</i> (ca. 340 B.C.)
[Arist.] <i>Ath. Pol.</i>	Pseudo-Aristotle, <i>Constitution of the Athenians</i> (ca. 340 B.C.)
Ath.	Athenaeus (essayist, ca. 200 B.C.), <i>Deipnosophistae</i> (<i>The Learned Banquet</i>)
Cae. <i>BAfr</i>	C. Julius Caesar (Roman general, statesman, writer, ca. 50 B.C.), <i>The African War</i>
Cae. <i>BC</i>	Caesar, <i>The Civil War</i>
Cae. <i>BG</i>	Caesar, <i>The Gallic War</i>
Cic. <i>Brut.</i>	M. Tullius Cicero (Roman orator and statesman, ca. 55 B.C.), <i>Brutus</i> (a history of Roman oratory)
Cic. <i>Caec.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Caecina</i>
Cic. <i>De Inv.</i>	Cicero, <i>De Inventione Rhetorica</i>
Cic. <i>De Rep.</i>	Cicero, <i>De Re Publica</i> (written ca. 45 B.C.)
Cic. <i>De Sen.</i>	Cicero, <i>De Senectute</i> (<i>On Old Age</i> : written ca. 45 B.C.)
Cic. <i>Phil.</i>	Cicero, <i>Philippic Speeches</i> (denouncing Marc Antony, 44–43 B.C.)
Cic. <i>Planc.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Plancio</i>
Cic. <i>Sest.</i>	Cicero <i>Pro Sestio</i>
Demosth.	Demosthenes (Athenian orator and statesman, ca. 340 B.C.)
Demosth. <i>Chers.</i>	Demosthenes, <i>On the Chersonese</i>
Demosth. <i>Phil.</i>	Demosthenes, <i>Speeches against Philip</i>
Dio	L. Cassius Dio (statesman and historian, ca. 220 A.D.), <i>History of Rome</i>
Diod.	Diodorus of Sicily (historian, ca. 30 B.C.)
Dion. Hal.	Dionysius of Halicarnassus (historian and literary critic, ca. 30 B.C.)
Enn. <i>Ann.</i>	Ennius (Roman poet, ca. 200 B.C.), <i>Annales</i>

<i>FGrHist</i>	F. Jacoby, <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i>
frg.	fragment (a partially preserved ancient text)
Front. <i>Strat.</i>	Sex. Julius Frontinus (Roman general and military writer, ca. 75 A.D.), <i>Strategems</i>
Hdt.	Herodotus (Greek historian, ca. 430 B.C.)
Hieron. <i>in Dan.</i>	Saint Jerome (Christian writer, ca. 400 A.D.), <i>Commentary on Daniel</i>
Hirt. <i>BG</i>	A. Hirtius (Roman general and writer, 44 B.C.), <i>The Commentaries of Caesar on the Gallic War, Book 8</i> (completed by Hirtius)
Isocr. <i>Pan.</i>	Isocrates (Athenian essayist and orator, fourth century B.C.), <i>Panegyricus</i> (ca. 380 B.C.)
Livy	T. Livius (Roman historian, ca. 15 B.C.)
Lys.	Lysias (Athenian orator, ca. 390 B.C.)
Nep. <i>Paus.</i>	Cornelius Nepos (Roman biographical writer, ca. 50 B.C.), <i>Life of Pausanias</i>
OGIS	<i>Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae</i>
Paus.	Pausanias (historical/geographical writer, ca. 150 A.D.)
Plaut. <i>Amphitr.</i>	Plautus (Roman comic playwright, ca. 200 B.C.), <i>Amphityron</i>
Plaut. <i>Stich.</i>	Plautus, <i>Stichus</i> (performed at Rome in autumn 200 B.C.)
Plin. <i>NH</i>	Pliny the Elder (Roman statesman and scientist, ca. 70 A.D.), <i>Natural History</i>
Plut.. <i>Arat.</i>	Plutarch (Greek biographer and essayist, ca. 110 A.D.), <i>Life of Aratus of Sicyon</i>
Plut. <i>Arist.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Aristides the Just</i>
Plut. <i>Artax.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Shah Artaxerxes III</i>
Plut. <i>Cleom.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Cleomenes</i>
Plut. <i>Dem.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Demetrius the Besieger</i>

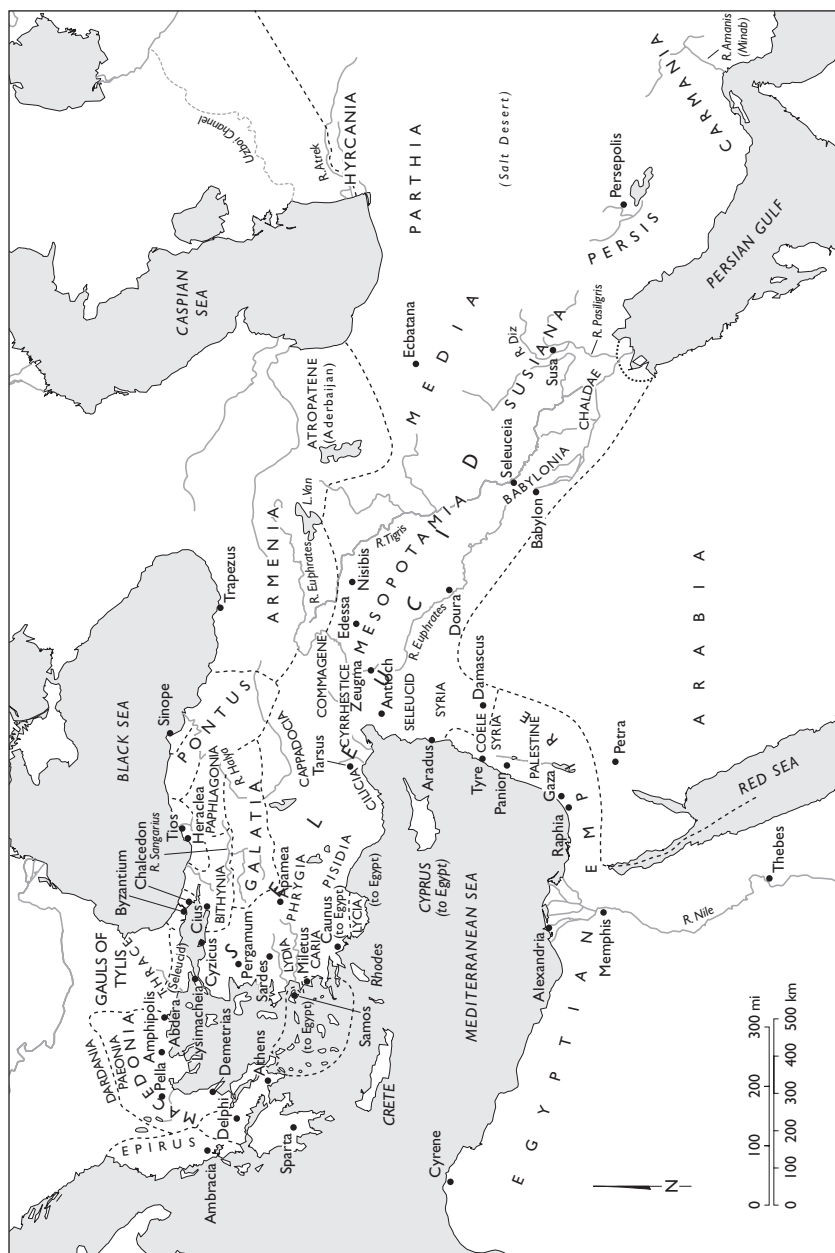
Plut. <i>Eum.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of Eumenes</i>
Plut. <i>Flam.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of T. Quinctius Flaminius</i>
Plut. <i>Mor.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Moral Essays</i>
Plut. <i>Pyrrh.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Life of King Pyrrhus of Epirus</i>
Pollux, <i>Onom.</i>	Julius Pollux (Greek essayist, second century A.D.), <i>Onomasticon</i>
Polyaen.	Polyaenus (Greek military writer, ca. 160 A.D.), <i>Strategems</i>
Pomp. Trog. <i>Prol.</i>	Pompeius Trogus (Roman writer, ca. 40 B.C.), <i>Prologue to His World or Philippic History</i> (a work now extant only in the epitome of Justin, a Roman writer of unknown date)
Ps.-Xen.	Pseudo-Xenophon, "The Old Oligarch" (Athenian oligarchical pamphleteer, ca. 420 B.C.)
Serv. <i>ad Aen.</i>	Servius (Roman grammarian and scholar, ca. 390 A.D.), <i>Commentary on Virgil's Aeneid</i>
Sil Ital. <i>Pun.</i>	Silius Italicus (Roman poet, ca. 90 A.D.), <i>Punica</i>
Syll. ³	<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> , third edition
Tac. <i>Ann.</i>	P.(?) Cornelius Tacitus (Roman historian, ca. 110 A.D.), <i>Annals</i>
Tac. <i>Hist.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Histories</i>
Theocr. <i>Id.</i>	Theocritus (poet, ca. 270 B.C.), <i>Idylls</i>
Thuc.	Thucydides (Greek historian, ca. 410 B.C.)
Val. Max.	Valerius Maximus (Roman essayist, ca. 20 A.D.)
Vell. Pat.	Velleius Paterculus (Roman historian, ca. 30 A.D.)
Virg. <i>Aen.</i>	P. Virgilius Maro (Roman poet, ca. 25 B.C.), <i>Aeneid</i>

Xen. <i>Anab.</i>	Xenophon (Greek general, historian, and essayist, ca. 360 B.C.), <i>Anabasis</i>
Xen. <i>Cyrop.</i>	Xenophon, <i>The Education of Cyrus</i>
Xen. <i>Hell.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Hellenic History</i>
Zon.	Zonaras (historian, ca. 1110 A.D.), epitome of the <i>History</i> of Dio (<i>q. v.</i>)

Note: Cross-references by footnote (e.g., “text at chap. 2, n. 67”) usually refer to the main text of the page on which that footnote appears.



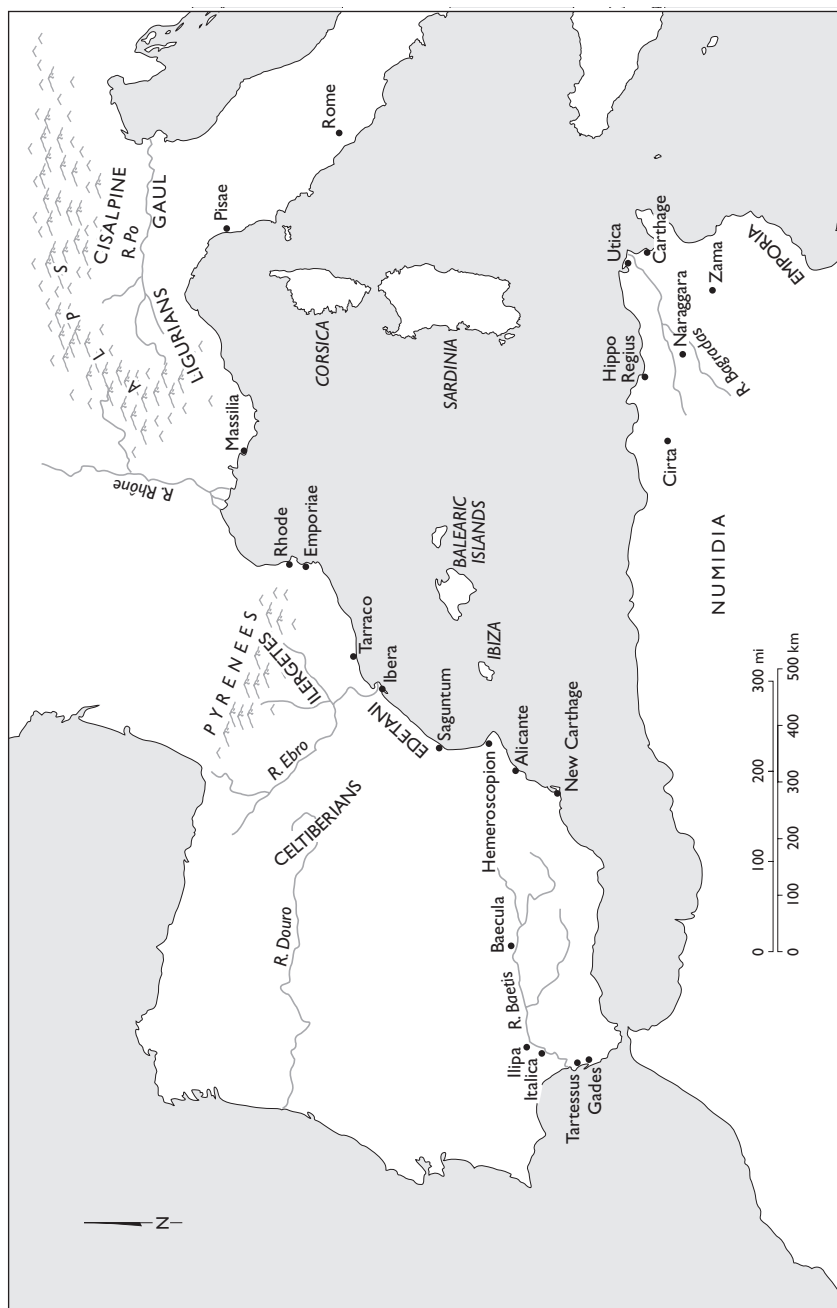
Map 1. European Greece and Western Asia Minor



Map 2. The Hellenistic Kingdoms



Map 3. Italy and Sicily



Map 4. "The Western Mediterranean"

Political Science and Roman History

International politics in the ancient Mediterranean world was long a multipolar anarchy—a world containing a plurality of powerful states, contending with each other for hegemony, within a situation where international law was minimal and in any case unenforceable. None of these powerful states ever achieved lasting hegemony around the shores of the great sea: not Persia, not Athens, not Sparta; not Tarentum, not Syracuse, not Carthage. Alexander III the Great, the fearsome king of Macedon, might have established a permanent political entity encompassing the entire Mediterranean, but the conqueror of Asia died prematurely in Babylon in 323 B.C., at age 32, and the empire he had created almost immediately fell apart. During the chaos that followed Alexander's death, several of his generals founded great territorial states themselves, Macedonian dynasties with worldwide ambitions, each in bitter competition for power with the others: the Ptolemaic regime based in Egypt; the Seleucids based in Syria and Mesopotamia; the Antigonids based in Macedon. But despite the brilliance, vigor, and ruthlessness of the founders—and the brilliance, vigor, and ruthlessness of some of their successors—none of these monarchies was ever able to establish universal domination. The world of multipolarity and unstable balances of power continued in the Mediterranean—along with the prevalence of war and the absence of international law.

Eventually, however, one state did create predominance throughout the Mediterranean world: the Republic of Rome. By the 180s B.C., al-

though there still remained in existence several important states other than Rome, the Mediterranean finally had only one political and military focus, and only one dominant actor; there was a preponderance of power in the hands of a single state. In political-science terminology, a system of unipolarity had replaced the long-standing multipolar anarchy.¹ Samuel Huntington sets higher standards of dominance for the presence of a unipolar situation, defining unipolarity as a system where there is “one superpower, no significant major powers, and many minor powers,” in which the dominant power has the capability to “resolve important international issues alone,” and where no combination of other states has the power to prevent it from doing so. Even by this stricter definition the Mediterranean was beginning to approach that situation by the 180s, and had definitely achieved it by the 160s.² It should be emphasized that although Rome in this period had begun direct administration of some areas in the West (Sicily; Sardinia and Corsica; the eastern regions of Spain), it was still far from converting this new international situation into anything like a formal empire on a Mediterranean-wide basis. There was, even in the 160s, not the slightest direct and formal Roman administration in the Greek East. But in political-science terminology the Mediterranean had now become a unipolar system instead of a multipolar world; and so it would remain for the next six hundred years.³

The central questions with which modern historians of Rome contend in the period of enormous expansion in Roman power and influence from the 340s B.C. have been (1) the motivations behind Roman expansion, and (2) the reasons for Roman hegemonic success. Clearly Roman motives were complex, and the reasons for the exceptional success of the Republic were similarly multiple. The analytical situation is made much

1. Unipolarity as an international system containing only one predominant state and one dominant actor (admitted to be an imprecise definition): Mastanduno 1997: 52; cf. Geller and Singer 1998: 114; Evans and Newnham 1998: 550.

2. Huntington 1999: 35. Some scholars think Huntington's definition sets too high a standard of dominance for the unipolar power: Brooks and Wohlforth 2002: 20–21. That Rome had achieved the vaguer definition of unipolarity by the 180s B.C., and then achieved Huntington's definition of unipolarity by ca. 168 B.C., is—strikingly—the approximate thesis of the Hellenistic historian Polybius, writing ca. 150 B.C. See Polyb. 1.1–4 and 29.21 and 27, discussed below, chap. 7.

3. The long political evolution necessary for turning a balance of power in the Greek East greatly favoring Rome into a formal empire (an evolution not completed until the 60s B.C.): see Kallet-Marx 1995. The characteristics that can lead to great durability in a unipolar system: see Wohlforth 1999: 5–41; Wohlforth 2002: 98–118. The dominance achieved by Rome ca. 188 does not minimize the actions taken by the Romans in 188–168 B.C., and continuing sporadically thereafter, to prevent the rise of any potential rivals.

more difficult because our knowledge of events is far from complete. One theme, however, has come to dominate modern scholarship on this problem: that Rome was exceptionally successful within its world because Roman society and culture, and Rome's stance toward other states, were exceptionally warlike, exceptionally aggressive, and exceptionally violent—and not merely in modern terms but in ancient terms as well. The most influential work here is that of W. V. Harris, especially in his brilliant and groundbreaking book *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome*.⁴ On this model, Rome was a vicious and voracious predator, in political-science terminology a “revolutionary” or “unlimited revisionist state” in the successive and ever larger state-systems in which it participated; the other Italian states and then the other Mediterranean states were its victims. On such a model, the rise to world power of exceptionally militaristic and bellicose Rome is self-explanatory.⁵

The present study takes a different approach. It applies to other ancient states the insights and method of analysis pioneered by Harris concerning Rome. It finds militarism, bellicosity, and diplomatic aggressiveness rife throughout the polities of the ancient Mediterranean both east and west. And it argues that while Rome was certainly a harshly militaristic, warlike, aggressive, and expansionist state from a modern perspective, so too were all Rome's competitors, in an environment that was an exceptionally cruel interstate anarchy. Moreover, the present study finds the origins of the harsh characteristics of state and culture now shown to be not just Roman but common to all the ancient Mediterranean great powers, all the second-rank powers, and even many minor states as well, not so much within the specific pathological development of each state (what the political scientists call “unit-attribute” theory), but rather proposes that these characteristics were caused primarily (though not solely) by the severe pressures on all states deriving from the harsh nature of the interstate world in which they were forced to exist.

In other words: the cruel characteristics of the interstate system exerted significant pressures, over time, both upon the internal cultures and upon the interstate behavior of both Rome and all other states within the system. Roman militarism and aggressiveness were intense; perhaps from a modern perspective they seem pathological; and they were certainly crucial factors in Roman success. No one will deny that last point.

4. Harris 1979: esp. chaps. 1–3, 5.

5. Hence the narrative of Roman wars presented in Harris 1979: chap. V. On status-quo, revisionist, and “unlimited revisionist states, see below, chap. 2.

But it is also true that none of those characteristics was unique to Rome—which suggests in turn that they did not arise out of something specially pathological in Roman culture.

The modern scholarly concentration upon the (negative) characteristics of Roman society and culture, and its focus upon the aggressive stance of Rome—and Rome alone—toward the world, probably derives ultimately from the tradition of hostile analysis of successful imperialism in the modern world founded by John A. Hobson (himself a trained classicist), at the turn of the twentieth century, in *Imperialism: A Study*. Perhaps, too, it derives from the fragmentation of the historical discipline into introverted and isolationist national (i.e., unit) subdisciplines, where it is natural to concentrate primarily and very intensely upon the characteristics of the society that one studies, so that the outside world tends to become rather a blank or a mere backdrop.⁶ But if Rome in fact shared its heavily militarized, bellicose, and aggressive characteristics with all the other great states in the ancient Mediterranean with which it competed for survival and power, and which it eventually defeated (as well as with medium-sized states and even small states), then the explanation for the rise of Rome cannot lie simply in the fact that Rome was heavily militarized, bellicose, and aggressive.

The major theme of this monograph is, then, that the Mediterranean interstate system, when considered as a whole, was structurally what modern political scientists call a “multipolar anarchy”; that it possessed little or no international law, and was regulated solely by complex and fluid balances of power (primarily, and very crudely, military power); and that the compelling pressures toward bellicosity and aggressiveness exerted by this exceptionally harsh and competitive interstate environment upon all the states within it are visible throughout the entire warlike history of Mediterranean interstate life. This is the case both in European Greece and the eastern Mediterranean as well as in Italy and the western Mediterranean.

A word is needed at this point regarding general issues of terminology. It is true that although I refer throughout this study to a Mediterranean-wide anarchy, in fact in each chapter I analyze the characteristics only of various regional state-systems: Classical Greece and the Aegean; then

6. Hobson 1902 is the founding document of the scholarly tradition that finds the explanation for imperial expansion in the socioeconomic distortions and pathologies of the imperial society (in this case, Victorian Britain). The dangers of introverted and isolationist national historiographies for explaining the complexities of imperial expansion: see, e.g., Bayly 1988: 14–15.

the Hellenistic eastern Mediterranean; then Italy, followed by the western Mediterranean. This is different from approaching the entire Mediterranean as itself a single system. Only in chapter 7 do I arrive (with Polybius) at the consolidation of the Mediterranean world into a single anarchic state-system involving the interaction of all polities from Spain to Syria. The decisive event here occurred with the Roman decision of 201–200 B.C. to intervene strongly in developments in the Greek East. Yet although each of chapters 3, 4, and 5 below describes the workings of a separate regional anarchic state-system within the Mediterranean, at all times from roughly 750 B.C. to about 188 B.C. the Mediterranean as a whole displays a general situation best described as anarchy. It is not yet, strictly speaking, a single anarchic system of states, because the regions are going their own ways separately and are having their own wars, wars with little impact beyond their own regions; they have not yet combined into a single continually interactive system. But viewed broadly, the Mediterranean world is quite clearly a general anarchy built up from the regional anarchic state-systems.

An important subtheme in this study, however, is that the regional system of states in the eastern Mediterranean after 207 B.C. specifically experienced what scholars of international relations call a “power-transition crisis”: a crisis brought about by the unexpected collapse of the power of one of the main pillars of the Hellenistic multipolar system, Ptolemaic Egypt. The Roman decision of 201–200 B.C. to intervene aggressively in the Greek East, taken at a time when the Roman Republic had just emerged as the predominant power in the western Mediterranean, is sometimes seen as a classic example of Roman imperialism, meant in the most negative sense: having conquered the West, the Romans now turned immediately to the East, in an intentional step-by-step conquest of the world by an exceptional international predator.⁷ Now, the Roman intervention certainly led to the beginning of Roman military and political hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean. But in good part this Roman intervention was a response to the general systemic crisis brought about by the collapse of the Ptolemies, as Theodor Mommsen, one of the great pioneers of Roman studies, recognized long ago in the first volume of his *Römische Geschichte*.⁸ Nor was Rome the only state to act

7. See Veyne 1975: 833–46; Harris 1979: 212–18; Mandel 1989: 89–94, and 1991: 37–42; Derow 1991: 261–70; Habicht, 1995/1997: 185, cf. 194–95; Heftner 1997: esp. 186 and 317.

8. Mommsen 1907: 697–700. Emphasized by Raditsa 1972: 564–65.

under the pressures generated by this great crisis. The large-scale attacks of Philip V of Macedon and of the Seleucid king Antiochus III the Great against the Ptolemaic state, beginning in 203/202 B.C. and accelerating in violence thereafter, were, equally, responses to that systemic crisis—highly aggressive, and increasingly so. The actions of several Greek states—at least four of them—in sending ambassadors to Rome to call upon the Romans for help against Philip and Antiochus in this threatening situation were, similarly, crucial responses to the crisis. In other words: every state here was in one way or another responding to the ongoing general crisis, and they were all responding to it simultaneously and indeed synergistically. The focus should not be on Rome alone—as it has been. The Roman Senate, for complex reasons, decided to answer the Greek pleas for help in the affirmative, and to intervene; but Roman intervention did not cause the crisis in the East. Well before the Roman intervention, the entire eastern Mediterranean was already at war from the northern Aegean to the frontiers of Egypt itself.

To attribute a crucial role in the expansion of Roman power and influence to the characteristics of the international system in which the Roman Republic existed, to the significant pressures toward aggressive state action that this harsh environment placed upon all states within it (resulting in a synergistic interaction of multiple aggressive and warlike polities simultaneously)—that is, to attribute strong causative power to the structural dynamics of the overarching system, rather than to focus attention solely upon Roman behavior (as modern scholars have so often done), is to adopt the approach of a dominant school of thought in the modern study of international relations. That school of thought is a family of closely related (and occasionally competing) theories, based on a common core of grim tenets concerning the international life of states. Its branches go by various names: classical realism, neorealism, structural realism, contextual realism, dynamic realism, defensive and offensive realism. But the movement is also increasingly called simply and broadly the “Realist” approach to international relations (which is actually a return to an old terminology), and for the sake of simplicity it is “Realism” that will generally be used in this monograph.⁹

9. The Realist school as a family of related (yet competing) theories that share core hypotheses: Wayman and Diehl 1994b: 3–26; Rose 1998: 144–72; cf. Lynn-Jones 1998: 157–59. Realist paradigms as the dominant research program in international-relations studies: see, e.g., Kapstein and Mastanduno 1999: ix–x. Not that Realism has gone unchallenged: see below, chap. 2. I find myself most comfortable with the subschool called “offensive” Realism, which especially stresses the enormous systemic pressures upon all

Although Realist paradigms of interstate behavior constitute a dominant approach in modern studies of international relations, the conceptual framework and theoretical insights of Realism have only rarely and superficially been applied to the study of the state-systems of the ancient Mediterranean. And they have never been applied in detail to the study of Roman expansion. This is because most scholars of the ancient world know little or nothing of the vast Realist theoretical literature on international relations and the historical case studies attached to it, while conversely most Realist theoreticians lack a sophisticated knowledge of Mediterranean antiquity.¹⁰ The only important exception to this lack of communication between historians of Mediterranean antiquity and scholars of international relations is an excellent collection of essays dealing primarily with the Peloponnesian War, *Hegemonic Rivalry: From Thucydides to the Nuclear Age*, edited by the ancient historian Barry Strauss and the political scientist Richard Ned Lebow. Yet this potentially important book has had no intellectual impact on ancient studies—and it is now out of print and almost unobtainable.¹¹

The failure of communication between political scientists and modern historians of Rome is unfortunate, for Realist concepts of state interaction have much to contribute to our understanding of the emergence of Roman hegemony first in Italy and then in the Mediterranean. Episodes of revolutionary change always lend themselves to controversy; but our understanding of them can be significantly deepened by studying them in a theoretically informed manner.¹² Conversely, the ability of Realist ideas concerning the interactions of states within interstate systems to help explain the rise of Rome first in Italy, then in the western Mediterranean, and then in the Mediterranean as a whole may help to confirm, via a specific and complex case study, the general validity of Realist paradigms. This is important: political scientists note that because major systemic transformations occur only rarely, the number of case

states in anarchic state-systems to expand their power and influence. Latest advocate of offensive realism: Mearsheimer 2001, esp. chap. 2.

10. Brief discussions of Roman expansion under the Republic couched in political-science terminology: Liska 1978: 11–14; Gilpin 1981: 99–100 and 146–47; Doyle 1986: 82–91; Little in Buzan et al. 1993: 144–50. Typical of the lack of communication between political scientists and ancient historians, Little wrongly refers to the subject allies of Athens as its “colonies” (144), a term with a completely different meaning in ancient studies than in nineteenth- and twentieth-century European imperialism. Worse: Liska 1978: 12–14 continually refers to “King Antioch,” which is to mistake Antiochus III for his capital city.

11. Lebow and Strauss 1991; earlier: Fliess 1966—another work that is rarely cited.

12. See the comments of Wollforth 1994/1995: 127.

studies on which to test their hypotheses about fundamental systemic transformations is all too small.¹³ With regard to the general interactions of states under a militarized multipolar anarchy, and with regard specifically to the interactions of states during a power-transition crisis, here, then, is a major new test case, and one previously ignored by the political scientists, who simply do not know about the crisis that convulsed the eastern Mediterranean after 207 B.C. Thus it is missing from Robert Gilpin's survey of violent system transformations, though both the Peloponnesian War and the Second Punic War are included, and it is missing also from the surveys of violent system transformations in both Michael Doyle's study of empires (though the conflicts both between Athens and Sparta and between Rome and Carthage appear) and from Barry Buzan, Charles Jones, and Richard Little's study of the impact of anarchy upon state conduct (though again both the Peloponnesian War and the Second Punic War appear).¹⁴ Yet the systemwide crisis brought about by the sudden collapse of the Ptolemaic state after 207, leading to the intervention of Rome in the Greek East, is a case that ought to be considered by political scientists and included in their repertoire.

In constructing a model of complex events that emphasizes how an important new causal factor should be considered, one runs an inherent risk that other factors will be pushed toward the background. But in applying international-relations theory to the long-standing multipolar anarchy in which Rome came into existence (starting with the Classical Greek city-states and proceeding to a study of the Hellenistic Mediterranean both in the East and in the West), and in applying the theory of power-transition crisis to the situation in the Hellenistic Mediterranean after 207 B.C., the goal is not to show that a system-level explanation offers a complete explanation of the revolutionary events that occurred. No theorist of international relations argues that the nature of the system within which states exist, or pressure from the structure and characteristics of that system, provides by itself a full explanation of specific interstate behavior.¹⁵ Human decisions are still made by individual hu-

13. Complaints about the paucity of testable cases for Realist hypotheses concerning major system transformation (one result being a constant flow of Realist studies on the outbreak of the First World War); see, e.g., Wohlforth 2000: 127 and 132 (with further references).

14. Gilpin 1981: chap. 5; Doyle 1986; Buzan et al. 1996. The absence from these works of the crisis initiated by the collapse of the Ptolemies is a by-product of the fact that Hellenistic history after the death of Alexander the Great is itself little known to historians beyond the Hellenistic specialists.

15. See, e.g., Waltz 2000: 24.

man beings (those who constitute, in one form or another, the decision-making elite); more broadly, the political cultures within which human beings make those decisions are quite specific and hugely influential on those decisions, and those cultures vary one from another. Theorists do argue, however, that the nature of the interstate system offers an important part of the story, for structural pressures encourage certain types of state actions while discouraging other types. And since international-systems theory has never been applied to the study of the rise of Rome, an examination of the nature of the state-systems within the ancient Mediterranean as entities with their own important characteristics and their own types of crises can provide a new perspective on both long-term developments and specific crucial events.

In other words, Realist theory offers us an additional factor to consider when attempting to explain both the long-term process of the emergence of Roman power and the revolutionary events that occurred in the late third century. It enables us to improve our understanding of what occurred. It also enables us to improve our understanding of the nature of the Romans' achievement. No claim is being made here that historians writing about interstate relations in antiquity should abandon other approaches—only that the family of Realist international-relations theories has valuable insights to offer students of international relations in all periods, and that it has powerful heuristic value for the study of Roman Republican interstate relations. This is especially because recent discussions of the causes of Roman expansion have focused so strongly on the unit-level type of explanation, rather than the system level, attributing all major interstate outcomes to the behavior of Rome alone, and not paying enough attention to the characteristics and dynamics of international anarchy, to the characteristics of other states within that anarchy, and to the characteristics of the typical (violent) interactions of those states. Scholars of ancient international relations should remember that the fifth-century Hippocratic treatise *Airs, Waters, Places* urged that humans be studied in relation to their environment.

For Realist theoreticians, the following study is important for two reasons. First, it tests the validity of Realist paradigms of interstate interaction in view of the significant criticisms—Neoliberal international institutionalism and radical Constructivism—to which those paradigms have been subjected in the past decade, as they relate to conditions in an arena of study that previously has not come under detailed analysis. Second, it tests the validity of one of contemporary Realism's fundamental claims, the claim to universalism; hence Kenneth Waltz, in *Theory of In-*

ternational Politics, one of the founding documents of Realist theory, can write, “The enduring anarchic character of international politics accounts for the striking sameness in the quality of international life through the millennia”; and the prominent theorist Charles Glazer is similar: “states exist in a condition of international anarchy that does not vary.”¹⁶ If Realist analytical claims can be shown to be valid for the ancient Mediterranean world, this would enhance confidence in Realist theories as an explanation across the entire history of international relations. The interstate world of the ancient Mediterranean therefore forms an important test case for Realist claims to be elucidating universal principles of interstate politics.¹⁷ It should be stated here at the beginning that I will argue that although detailed distinctions and qualifications must always be made, the systems of warlike and aggressive states that existed in the ancient Mediterranean conformed from the beginning to the grimmest and most unforgiving of Realist paradigms.¹⁸

This monograph is an interdisciplinary work, intended for an audience both of ancient historians and of political scientists. The following chapter, chapter 2, sets out for modern historians of antiquity the fundamental hypotheses of contemporary Realist theories concerning the impact of the characteristics of the interstate system upon the behavior of the states within that system, as well as the basic critiques of those theories. Most political scientists will know this material well, but it is foreign to the ancient historians. That chapter also indicates how the approach of this study to ancient international relations is, despite its focus on system dynamics, not monocausal—for it offers a statement on exactly how the Roman Republic was unique as a unit within its environment, and how that unique internal characteristic (which was not exceptional bellicosity, though the Romans were certainly harshly bellicose) was crucial to Roman success. Chapter 3 and then chapter 4 explain the continual relevance of these Realist hypotheses to the political history of the fragmented world of Mediterranean states in both the Classical and

16. Waltz 1979: 66; Glazer 1997: 171. Cf. Doyle 1991: 175 (“the continuity of interstate anarchy”); Elman and Elman 1997: 9 and n. 11, cf. 13–14; and now Copeland 2000: chap. 8 *passim* (esp. 233–34).

17. In fact, Realist claims about intercommunal violence, and the structural causes of such conflict, extend back into the pre-state Neolithic period: see Keeley 1996: 16–17.

18. Thus the debate between offensive and defensive Realism over whether all anarchic interstate systems offer states strong incentives to expand or only some systems do—see now Taliaferro 2000—has no import for the present study, because the ancient Mediterranean system offered very strong incentives for states to expand even under the definitions of defensive Realism.

Hellenistic eras. Chapter 4 also contains a preliminary account of the power-transition crisis that began in the Greek Mediterranean with the unexpected collapse of the Ptolemaic regime after 207 B.C.—a subject to be reconsidered in chapter 7 from the Roman perspective. Chapter 5 then turns to the West and examines, with the help of Realist international-systems theory, the environment of Rome specifically and its interactions with that environment, first (chronologically) among the system of polities of central Italy and then among the system of great powers in the larger world of the western Mediterranean. Chapter 6 then offers a general comparison of the militarized, bellicose, and diplomatically aggressive culture of Republican Rome when set within the broader context of all the states that were forced to exist within the multipolar and heavily militarized Mediterranean anarchy. The chapter focuses on the question of whether Roman exceptionalism—the unique characteristics of this particular ancient state, which led it to exceptional interstate success in the ferocious interstate competition for security and power—lay in the phenomenon of exceptional Roman militarism. Finally, in chapter 7 a different kind of Roman exceptionalism and a different source of exceptional Roman power will be laid out in detail—an exceptionalism correctly underlined (once again) by Theodor Mommsen.¹⁹ This will be followed by a renewed and more detailed discussion of the Roman decision of 201–200 B.C. to intervene in the power-transition crisis in the eastern Mediterranean, and the consequences of that decision (including the wars both with Philip V of Macedon and the later war with Antiochus III the Great) down to 188 B.C.

19. Mommsen 1907: 340–45.

Realist Paradigms of Interstate Behavior

The purpose of this chapter is to set forth the basic elements in the Realist approach to interstate behavior—the core hypotheses of Realist theory. The Realist approach in analyzing interstate behavior is founded on three fundamental concepts: the prevalence of anarchy in the world of states (i.e., the lack of international law); the resultant grim self-help regime imposed upon all states and its impact upon the constellation of state actions (including especially power-maximizing conduct); and the importance of the stability or instability of balances of power.

ANARCHY

Contemporary Realist theoreticians begin by arguing that the explanation of much of the international behavior of states, both today and in the past, lies in their understandable self-seeking within a condition of violence and potential violence. This general condition of violence and potential violence is the consequence of international anarchy—that is, the absence of international law and/or of a central authority or effective mechanisms to enforce such law. Because states exist as a multiplicity of independent entities and actors, with each entity judging its own grievances and ambitions according to its own lights, in a system lacking a central authority and/or any effective international law, states are compelled to compete with each other in the pursuit of security. Security under these conditions is scarce. And because security is scarce, the competi-

tion for it is intense, ruthless, and indeed often violent. The dilemma of politics under such circumstances is put forth by Kenneth Waltz, the leading contemporary Realist theoretician:

The state among states conducts its affairs in the brooding shadow of violence. Because some states may at any time use force, all states must be prepared to do so—or live at the mercy of their neighbors. Among states, the state of nature is a state of war . . . not in the sense that war constantly occurs, but in the sense that with each state deciding for itself whether or not to use force, war may break out at any time.¹

And long before Waltz, in the seventeenth century, the dilemma of states under anarchy was put in similar fashion by Thomas Hobbes:

In all times kings, and persons of sovereign authority, because of their independency, are in continual jealousies, and in the state and posture of gladiators; having their weapons pointing and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their forts, garrisons, and guns, upon the frontiers of their kingdoms; and continual spies upon their neighbors; which is a position of war.²

In the absence of any supervising government or authority, or enforceable international law, “the threat of violence continually circumscribes international politics”—that is, it circumscribes the choices of action available to states.³ This is because the fate of each state depends primarily on its own responses to what other states do, or can do, or might do. This, in turn, is because states do not exist in isolation, but in systems: that is, groups of states where the behavior of each state is a necessary factor in the calculations of all others—and vice versa.⁴ But under the harsh conditions of anarchy and the absence of law, there is every likelihood that objective conflicts of interest among states will not only arise (Hobbes’s “jealousies”) but will also be conducted and resolved via the threat or actual use of force. And on this Kenneth Waltz quotes not Hobbes, but Cicero: “For what can be done against force without force?” (*Sest.* 92).⁵ Indeed, Waltz could have noted Cicero’s further observation that it is precisely the absence of effective institutions for the administration of law (*iudicia*: i.e., courts), and/or the ab-

1. Waltz 1979: 102; cf. Waltz 1959: 159–60. War is defined as “armed conflict between social units”: Keeley 1999: 29.

2. Hobbes 1959: 65, a passage emphasized by Wight 1978: 101.

3. Schelling 2000: 182; cf. Aron 1973: 6.

4. Definition of a state-system: Bull and Watson 1984: 1.

5. Waltz 1979: 102.

sence of respect for law, that is the primary source of conditions of violence: without the first, one has the second (*ibid.*). Both Greeks and Romans, as we will see, were well acquainted with interstate anarchy and its consequences.⁶ A condition of international anarchy leads, therefore, to competition among independent states in the arts and instruments of force, since this is the primary way to develop the means of survival and security in the presence of others under anarchic conditions. Because any state can resort to force on its own decision at any time, the structure of international relations unfortunately demands this behavior.⁷

A SELF-HELP REGIME

One implication of this Realist vision of relations among states as an anarchy in which war is always a threat is that the activity of every state in this harsh environment is focused mostly on achieving short-term self-preservation. To plan for the long term is a pointless task even if one has institutions capable of doing it (which, of course, ancient states did not); the issue of sheer short-term survival and security predominates, and must predominate.⁸ "Survival and security" means physical survival, of course (a real issue in antiquity, as we will see). Almost as important, however, is the preservation of a polity's autonomy and independence—that is, the survival of its political identity. But in an interstate system based on power, to preserve independence and identity takes power (i.e., the ability of a state to secure its own interests); and hence the objective of every state is—and must be—the acquisition of power. To possess security means having the power and influence to assure both the state's physical survival and its independence, and "never to be at the mercy of others." Security means also that a state possesses the capability at least to maintain its current position within the international system. In a world where the sense of

6. Cicero on the unfortunate necessity of the use of violence under conditions of anarchy: Wood 1988: 185–93; Lintott 1999: 54.

7. Waltz 1979: 127; cf. Schuman 1969: 485; Gilpin 1981: 7. The historical absence of effective international law: Aron 1973: 98–99. Formal anarchy need not mean that interstate politics is always total chaos (though it sometimes is)—the presence of large states can work to impose some type of *de facto* order (in the large states' interest); see Waltz 1979: 76. On delineation of degrees of hierarchy, see Watson 1992.

8. The centrality of self-preservation in state decision making in an anarchic environment: Aron 1973: 64–65 and 130; Waltz 1988: 616; Sheehan 1996: 8. The primitiveness of ancient decision-making procedures in foreign affairs: Astin 1968; Eckstein 1987a: esp. xvii–xx.

vulnerability is everywhere acute, this is the immediate goal and concern of every polity.⁹

A second corollary of an international system that is not merely an anarchy but inevitably a militarized anarchy is that for understanding the expansionistic conduct of states within such a system it is a mistake to focus solely on the internal political, economic, social, or cultural structure of any one state. Rather, the desire to maximize power and influence is primarily (though not exclusively) a function of the character of the international environment in which all states exist. This environment leads to habits of stern self-help.¹⁰ In an anarchy, “regardless of culture or ideology, all states act similarly, selfishly seeking to increase their power.”¹¹ When states can rely only upon their own resources for their survival and security, in the knowledge that no others will act altruistically on their behalf and that there is no international law to depend upon and/or no international authority or mechanism to enforce it, this stern system of self-help compels all states to conduct themselves in similar, harsh fashion. States thus become functionally similar—that is, intent on maximizing their own power and influence within the system. This is because self-help is a situation of high risk, and maximizing power and influence is the only immediately feasible way to lower the risk.¹² States that do not seek to maximize their power and influence—emulating their neighbors within the Hobbesian environment—run a high risk of being dominated or even destroyed. In other words, “structures encourage certain behaviors and penalize those who do not respond.”¹³ Or as Richard W. Sterling puts it: “States must meet the demands of the political eco-system or court annihilation.”¹⁴

What do we mean by international “structure”? Waltz defines international structure as consisting of three elements: it is the ordering principle of a system (anarchic or hierarchical), the characteristic of units within a system (functionally similar or differentiated in behavior), and the distribution of capabilities across units.¹⁵ In a world where the order-

9. Convenient discussion of power and of security: Evans and Newnham 1998: 446–48, 466, and 490–91. The goal “never to be at the mercy of others”: Aron 1973: 130. For the bitter Roman experience of this, see Livy 5.48.9, the famous apocryphal sneer of the Senone chief to the defeated Romans: *Vae victis!* (Woe to the conquered!).

10. Connection between anarchy and self-help: Aron 1973: 8–9 and 112; Waltz 1979: 104.

11. Taylor 1978: 130.

12. Cf. Mearsheimer 1995: esp. 11–12.

13. Waltz 1979: 106.

14. Sterling 1974: 336.

15. Waltz 1979: 100–101; cf. 97.

ing principle is anarchy, states seek survival through competitive self-help strategies, and are functionally similar in their rivalrous self-seeking; the element that varies is the distribution of capabilities (power) across the units. One may investigate the causes of the increase or decrease in power that gives certain units more advantage or less in the competition for survival, but the severity of competition is inherent in anarchy. By contrast, where the ordering principle is hierarchy (tending toward unipolarity or universal empire), the functions of states may vary (as some become peaceful out of choice or necessity), competition decreases, and the distribution of power across the units tends to stabilize in favor of one unit. But to achieve a structure of hierarchy out of a structure of anarchy is very difficult.¹⁶

A third corollary is that all states within such a system of militarized anarchy and self-help will naturally seek not merely to maximize their power and influence but to gain actual superiority over other states. As the political scientist Hans Morgenthau puts it: states “must actually aim not at a balance—that is, equality—of power, but at a superiority of power in their own behalf.”¹⁷ According to political scientists, in other words, the seeking of (at least perceived) superiority of power is a natural tendency of states in an anarchic system.¹⁸

This occurs for several reasons. First, to seek survival and security through balances of power involves the careful management of other states.¹⁹ The method has its attractions—especially for a state on the periphery of an already established system of equilibrium—because it lessens the peripheral state’s direct responsibility for areas of the world in which it may have limited interest, leaving it free to focus on other regions of greater perceived importance. That is: it diminishes unnecessary effort.²⁰ But although *de facto* balances of power among states occur frequently in the international environment, they are also unstable. Hence their management is a complex and difficult task—requiring constant vigilance and the careful adjustment of one’s policies in accordance with the continual shifts of capabilities and influence within the anarchy. It is therefore tempting to solve the problem of achieving survival and security outright, simply through achieving superiority.²¹

16. Cf. Keohane 1986: 14–15; Spirtas 1996: 391–92.

17. Morgenthau 1973: 208.

18. Sheehan 1996: 14.

19. Aron 1973: 100.

20. Sheehan 1996: 69–70.

21. *Ibid.* 14.

An even more important motive for seeking survival and security through accumulation of superiority is that no state in a militarized anarchy can accurately know the capabilities of the many other competing states. Ignorance on this crucial subject is not total; but information is usually uncertain, sporadic, and difficult to interpret, whereas distrust of motives and intentions of others is rampant. States are to a significant extent opaque to one another, and what is worse is that their actual power capabilities can become fully known in only one way: through the cruel test of war.²² Because of this dilemma—which theorists term the “uncertainty principle”—preoccupation with identifying dangers and potential dangers and preparing to counteract such dangers becomes a way of life for all states existing in anarchic systems.²³ That is: being uncertain about their own actual power, the actual power of potential adversaries, and the balance between them, states will naturally seek to insure themselves against making the dangerous error of overestimating their own capabilities and underestimating those of others. And so they will naturally seek the power capability to counter not just any anticipated threat but also any greater than anticipated threat—the “worst-case scenario.” The pressures of the international environment—the militarized anarchy, the dependence upon self-help, uncertainty about the motives of others, and uncertainty regarding their own capabilities—push all states in this direction.²⁴ Of course, when many governmental elites within a state-system are socialized to such thinking (and acting), the result—tragically—can be a self-fulfilling prophecy.²⁵

While it is therefore tempting for suspicious contemporaries and rivals (and, later, suspicious historians) to conclude from successful power-maximizing behavior that successful states were all along seeking not merely wide influence but actual empire, and while it is equally easy to attribute such striving for superiority to alleged pathologically aggres-

22. Importance of opacity: Morgenthau 1973: 208. Actual power capabilities of states unknown—even to themselves—until tested in war: Levy 1983: 24; Blainey 1988: 114; Thompson 1988: 41; Jervis 2001: 282 and n. 2; cf. Gilpin 1981: 9; Waltz 1993: 73; Wohlforth 1994/1995: 104–5, 123, and 127.

23. See esp. Jervis, 1976: 58–113; Taylor 1978: 130; Waltz 1988: 619; Sheehan 1996: 8; Glaser 1997: 184.

24. Relationship of the opacity of states and the “worst-case scenario” to the seeking of superiority: Morgenthau 1974: 208; van Evera 1998: 13–14. A classic case of the impact of the “worst-case scenario” is the growth in British fear in the mid-1890s that a coalition of France, Russia, and Germany (or, alternatively, the United States) might arise against them; however strange such a concept seems to us now, it led to a ferocious naval building program on the part of the British government: see Friedberg 1988: 157–65.

25. Cf. Jervis 2001: 283.

sive drives originating within these states' internal cultures, Realists argue that this may not be correct. In the self-help regime of a militarized international anarchy, "the pursuit of superiority rather than balance need not necessarily indicate imperialistic intentions."²⁶ Rather, the pursuit of superiority—of extensive control over the interstate environment—can be a natural and basically security-minded response to anarchic and dangerous surroundings. When states face the constant threat that other states will employ force to harm or conquer them, they are pushed to maximize their power relative to other states—because only the most powerful states can guarantee their own survival. Thus it is logical to gather up resources for oneself while simultaneously denying those resources to competitors and potential enemies, the result being greater control. Every polity in a militarized anarchy (where there is no enforceable international law) has this motivation, for the basic goal that such military-political realms compel the states within them to seek is security—and achieving security is no easy task. As Fareed Zakaria puts it: "In the anarchic, nonhierarchical international environment, states are driven by the system's competitive imperative: if a state does not attempt to maximize its influence, then another will seize the opportunity in its stead."²⁷ Realist theorists thus argue that in such a situation all states are inherently expansionist, for every state is willing to pay at least some price to expand its power and influence, and hence to increase its security (irrespective of any goals it might have beyond security).²⁸

Such power-maximizing behavior can be seen as developing in two distinct stages. First, if a state is powerful enough, threats to its physical existence are not only rebuffed but lead to an expansive reaction: the creation of a protective buffer zone around the metropolitan core. This is expansionist power maximizing in the service of physical survival, "self-propagation." The second stage is preclusive expansion, designed to avert or anticipate real or hypothetical threats (i.e., "worst-case scenarios") now aimed not directly at the metropolitan core itself but rather at the already existing large and outward-facing political system that helps guarantee security. The maintenance of this large, constructed system of outward-facing security, and of the image of power that goes with it, eventually become ends in themselves. True, these ends transcend self-preservation—

26. Sheehan 1996: 8; cf. Waltz 1979: 105 and 126, and Waltz 1998: 624; Taylor 1978: 127.

27. Zakaria 1998: 29; cf. Huntington 1993: 68–83, and now Taliaferro 2000: 128–29. Cf. Schuman 1974: 279: "Survival is the first law."

28. Wolfers 1962: 84–86 and 125; Glaser 1992: 501 and n. 4.

but what is important is that they ultimately point back toward self-preservation.²⁹

Both stages of expansion, and the motives at each stage, combine elements both of defense and of offense. But every state in an anarchy that has the capability to create such an outward-facing political system seeks to construct one, seeks to maintain it, seeks to increase its size. It is all a natural reaction to the international anarchy. Thus the anarchic system itself provides crucial incentives for all states to expand. “For a state to choose not to become a great power is a structural anomaly”—for in power lies safety.³⁰ Hobbes, once more, offers this central Realist proposition of how states act here:

I put for a general inclination of all mankind a perpetual and restless desire of Power after Power, that ceaseth only in Death. And the cause of this is not always that a man hopes for more intensive delight, than he has already attained to; or that he cannot be content with a moderate power; but because he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath at present, without the acquisition of more.

In other words, any sensible state is under great pressure to become and remain stronger than its likely enemies. Since under anarchy the pressures to do this are the same for all states, when two or more such large and carefully constructed spheres of influence come into contact, the possibilities of serious conflict are obvious.³¹

Indeed, contemporary Realists also assert that almost any ongoing contact between states under any kind of international system (even a hierarchical and relatively peaceful system) will cause serious friction. This is because the interests of states are never completely congruent with one another. International affairs, then, are essentially competitive and conflictual, and it is difficult for states to exist harmoniously with each other for long periods. This is an insight that goes back at least as far as Thucydides and Plato (see chapter 3, below); Hobbes emphasized it; and to quote Alexander Hamilton:

To look for a continuation of harmony between a number of independent sovereignties situated in the same neighborhood would be to disregard

29. Liska 1978: 4–6, is the classic statement of this reconstruction.

30. Waltz 2000: 33. Cf. Labs 1997: 1–49.

31. Hobbes 1959: 67 (the quote); and note the comment of Reinhold Niebuhr (1932: 42): “There is no possibility of drawing a sharp line between the will-to-live and the will-to-power.” This is the fundamental principle of all geopolitics according to Frederick II of Prussia as well, who emphasized the intensity of interstate competition: Showalter 1996: 93–94.

the uniform course of human events, and to set at defiance the accumulated experience of the ages. The causes of hostility among nations are innumerable.³²

The latest research does indicate that fierce competition and war between human polities have existed from their earliest emergence; war between pre-state communities seems to have been both widespread and frequent. Yet simultaneously we find little evidence that warfare is (or was) enjoyed by even its most ferocious practitioners. What, then, was the cause of war? Lawrence Keeley argues that its prevalence in pre-state societies occurs primarily because “when no third party exists to adjudicate disputes, or when the mediators that do exist cannot enforce their decisions, disputants regularly resort to violent self-help.”³³

In sum, interstate politics appears aimed mostly at survival, as polities are forced to confront the potential threat of violence against them constituted by the very existence of other polities.³⁴ Hence it is not surprising to find that Ole R. Holsti lists 177 interstate wars in the 350 years of modern history covered in his study of interstate conflict—on average, one major war every two years in the international system; Daniel S. Geller and J. David Singer list ninety serious “crises” between states just in the period 1945–75.³⁵ And the grim rule appears to be that the number of interstate conflicts increases as the number of states increases.³⁶

In a system of militarized international anarchy, however, this conflictual and competitive relationship between and among states is exacerbated, since besides there being no central or guiding authority (of whatever sort) to aid or to compel a peaceful resolution of tensions, every state is (and must be) well armed. In such an environment, almost any dispute can lead to war. In such an environment, tensions between states—which are inevitable in any case (see above)—tend to build in intensity and to accumulate. Such accumulated tensions, frictions, and disputes tend in turn to develop into serious political antagonisms and so-called

32. Hamilton in Rossiter 1961: 54; noted by Wight 1978: 104. Hobbes 1959: 65; and see above n. 2. In general, see Waltz 1959: 160, and Waltz 1979: 102 and 127.

33. Keeley 1999: 160–61; cf. the tragic chap. 10 *passim*. Keeley (150) also stresses that the least warlike known societies are small groups mostly isolated from other human groups.

34. So Aron 1973: 7.

35. Holsti 1991: 20; Geller and Singer 1998: 99; cf. Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1982: 380–417.

36. Gochman and Maoz 1984: 592–93; accepted by Geller and Singer 1998: 128. Anthropologists have discerned the same grim rule in pre-state communities: the greater the number of social units, the greater the number of violent conflicts; see Keeley 1999: 118–21.

cold wars (that is, deep rivalries of long duration). And cold wars can easily transform into hot wars, because under anarchic conditions states lack less destructive ways of resolving serious mutual conflicts.³⁷ Hence Winston Churchill's striking image of the anarchic and bitterly competitive world of the great powers in the years before 1914:

One must think of the intercourse of nations in those days as prodigious organizations of forces which, like planetary bodies, could not approach each other without . . . profound magnetic reactions. If they got too near the lightnings would begin to flash.³⁸

And for the period just before Churchill, Otto von Bismarck's judgment on the necessary attitude for a statesman to adopt in interstate politics is, if anything, even more pessimistic: interstate politics is "just as if one were in a wood filled with suspicious characters, where one feels oneself instinctively on the defensive."³⁹

This interstate environment of unavoidable and continual friction is further worsened by what Realists term "the security dilemma." In an anarchic state-system where relations are strongly competitive and conflictual, where unresolved disputes, tensions, and frictions accumulate, and where every state must look primarily to its own resources in order to defend itself, it makes sense for every state to take the strongest possible measures to increase its own security. But measures successfully taken to increase one state's security act simultaneously to undermine the security of every other state. The result is that the level of tension and distrust intensifies all around.⁴⁰ Moreover, making a competitor (i.e., a potential adversary) more insecure not only tends to increase the other state's interest in militarization but also—as Realists judge from conditions in the modern world—the other state's own interest in territorial expansion. This latter interest, once again, does not derive from greed alone; rather it is also partly the result of a search under pressure for more resources and, equally important, to create more strategic depth against potential rivals and enemies, as well as to deny those resources to potential rivals and enemies.⁴¹

37. The buildup of unresolved tensions, frictions, and disputes as a major factor in the eventual outbreak of wars: Midlarsky 1988: 6 and 20–44. On the creation and dynamics of long-term dyadic antagonisms and rivalries, see Thompson 1999b: 3–28.

38. Churchill 1923: 27–28.

39. See Simpson 1929: 72–73.

40. The term "security dilemma": Herz 1950: 157–80. The fundamental study: Jervis 1978: 167–214. See also Waltz 1988: 619; Glaser 1997.

41. See Jervis 1978: 168–69, 187–99, and 211; Glaser 1997: 177 and n. 29. Application of this model to a specific historical case (how the extended rivalry between Britain

The concept was well understood in antiquity. Thucydides (4.95) has a Thessalian statesman of the 420s B.C. comment:

People who are tempted to attack their neighbors usually march most confidently against those who keep quiet and only defend themselves in their own country, but they think twice before they grapple with those who meet them outside their frontier and strike the first blow if opportunity offers.⁴²

George Liska evaluates the consequences of the security dilemma as they lead to a perpetual tragedy of relations between and among states, encouraging increased militarization and mutual hostility, yet not necessarily leading to increased security: "The fact that the most pervasive curse of inter-state relations resides in the very structure of the system inviting a competitive search for the means of self-preservation by acts construable as provocation is the cardinal reason for the tragic mode of international relations."⁴³ Herbert Butterfield emphasizes that it is this condition of "Hobbesian fear" that constitutes "the absolute predicament and the irreducible dilemma of international politics."⁴⁴

Given all the factors above, contemporary Realist theorists reach the blunt conclusion that in an international structure of militarized anarchy—to quote Kenneth Waltz again—"war is normal." That is: under anarchic conditions wars are natural occurrences, the natural consequences of the usual conduct among states. The wars arise not so much out of the structural defects of states themselves (though militarized internal cultures certainly play a significant role) as out of the defects of the international system of politics and power in which the states exist, and the accumulated tensions, distrust, and serious clashes of objective interest that anarchic conditions create.⁴⁵ This is also the reasoning of Hannah Arendt:

The chief reason warfare is still with us is neither a secret death wish of the human species, nor an irrepressible instinct of aggression, nor . . . the

and France in the eighteenth century led to the territorial expansion of both states): Hyam 1999: 31–32.

42. Seventy years later, Demosthenes famously advocated to the Athenians a similar policy of security through forward defense: see 1 *Olynth.* 15 and 25; 3 *Olynth.* 8–9; *Chers.* 8.18; 3 *Phil.* 52.

43. Liska 1990: 482. Similarly: Glaser 1997: 177; and Copeland 2000: 12, 17, 145–47, 165–68, and chap. 8 in general. International relations as tragedy: Spirtas 1996; and throughout below.

44. Butterfield 1951: 19—a point underlined by Wight 1978: 101–2.

45. Waltz 1959: 160; Waltz 1979: 102; Waltz 1988: 620–21 (the quote); Waltz 2000: 8. Regular warfare a fact of life under anarchy: Wight 1978: 137, confirmed by Holsti 1991 and Geller and Singer 1998. Note also Kegley and Padrala in Thompson 1988: xviii. The power of deep structure according to Realism: Little in Buzan et al. 1993: 150.

serious economic and social dangers inherent in disarmament, but the simple fact that no substitute for this final arbiter in international affairs has yet appeared on the political scene.⁴⁶

BALANCES AND IMBALANCES OF POWER

Finally, Realists argue that insofar as war can be avoided under heavily militarized conditions and in the absence of central authority or international law, it is *de facto* balances of power between and among states that determine war's prevalence or absence. This is true of wars at the local level as well as of large-scale wars at the systemwide level. Yet balance of power is a fragile of attempting to regulate interstate relations.

Many scholars suggest that international balances of power come in several essentially static forms, and they relate the frequency or absence of conflict to those forms. The varieties of balances of power are hypothesized as multipolarity (the prevalence in the international system of many powerful states) and bipolarity (the prevalence of two very powerful states, each more than a match for all states within its hegemony, two rivals that organize their respective domains as well as regulate the international system as a whole); some scholars add tripolarity (the dominance of the international system by three very powerful states), arguing that the qualities of tripolarity are so unique, especially regarding opportunities for balancing among the three major states, that it deserves a special taxonomic category; and finally unipolarity, the dominance or hegemony of a single superpower throughout the international system, a state more than a match in power for all other states. Unipolarity is—obviously—more peaceful than bipolarity or multipolarity. Empirical evidence suggests that bipolarity is somewhat less war-prone than multipolarity—which is itself very war-prone.⁴⁷

There is, further, significant historical evidence that within multipolar and bipolar systems, sudden and dramatic shifts in the distribution of capabilities across the system often create situations of special crisis.

46. Arendt 1970: 5. The insight tracing warfare among states under anarchic conditions to the pressures of the anarchic system in which states exist goes back in modern thinking at least to Lowes Dickenson 1926: chap. I (analyzing the events leading to World War I). Once more, the empirical findings of modern political scientists appear to confirm the thinking here: see above, n. 45.

47. See Waltz 1979: 161–70. Research on modern state-systems shows that bipolar systems are—depending on the study and the period covered—either significantly or (only) somewhat less war-prone than multipolar systems, though each is significantly more war-prone than unipolar systems: summary in Geller and Singer 1998: 115–17. On tripolarity: Schweller 1998: chap. 2.

The sudden and dramatic expansion in the capabilities of one or more of the major units in the system, or conversely a sudden and dramatic decline in the capabilities of one or more of the major units in the system, can be a very dangerous moment for the system as a whole. In such cases the current distribution of status, territory, and influence within the system comes increasingly into disjuncture with the realities of power—and hence it breaks down. The result tends to be large-scale war within the system—which analysts term “hegemonic war.” Hegemonic war in turn creates a new interstate structure more in accord with the real balance of power. This approach to state behavior emphasizes “power-transition crises” as crucial moments in the life of international systems.⁴⁸

“Power-transition theory” presents a less static view of the interstate relations than the approach based on polarities alone. It does not dismiss polarities as a factor, but stresses that relations among states always fluctuate, and that when fluctuations in power relations are sudden and large this causes an intensification of the normal conflict and insecurity inherent in situations of multipolarity or bipolarity under anarchy. Realists do not argue that the emergence of a power-transition crisis forces war: the approach is not deterministic. But Realists do argue that the emergence of a power-transition crisis greatly increases the possibility of large systemwide war, because the issues involved are so important for all states and for the system as a whole. Historically, the realignment of the structure of power, status, and influence within an interstate system has tended to be accompanied by great violence—hegemonic war.⁴⁹

In this respect, political scientists have also stressed the pressures on governments caused by international crisis itself. Studies of modern international crises have revealed that state conduct during crises becomes more and more stereotyped and constrained as a crisis proceeds. Although decisions remain in human hands, the choices available to politicians appear to them more and more foreclosed by the actions of others and the pressures of the crisis itself (including the need to maintain a state’s

48. Hypotheses and evidence on power-transition theory: Geller and Singer 1978: 72–75; Lemke and Kugler 1996: 3–35. Scholars divide on whether such crises emerge primarily from the state seeking to preserve its deteriorating position or from the ascendant state seeking to gain the influence and power within the system that it feels it deserves. The former position: Organski and Kugler 1980. The latter position: Gilpin 1981, adding that sometimes we cannot be certain which side causes the hegemonic war. See also Gilpin 1988: 602.

49. See Gilpin 1988. But again, this is only a trend; the Soviet Union and the United States managed the power-transition crisis of the late 1980s without the Soviet Union resorting to war, thanks to careful decision making on both sides.

prestige and status). Political scientists term this phenomenon “cognitive closure”—the feeling that there exists “no other choice.” It appears prominently, for instance, in the memoirs of the leaders whose decisions during the complex crisis of July 1914 brought on World War I:

The catastrophe came almost inevitably and irresistibly because of the great principle of the struggle for survival. . . . A cataclysm, a typhoon, beyond the control of statesmen. . . . One of my strongest feelings had been that I had no power [to prevent what occurred]; no human individual could have prevented it.⁵⁰

Theorists argue that such sentiments, while no doubt partly self-serving, also reflect the real impact of systemic pressures on decision makers during crises, as the pressures generated by the dynamics of crisis itself increasingly narrow the choices of action apparently available.⁵¹ Political scientists worry especially about the prospect of *premature* cognitive closure—when the feeling among statesmen that there is no other choice forecloses options of state action that still actually exist. And under conditions of international anarchy the pressures on decision makers during crises to move in a forceful direction are especially strong. We will see that these phenomena are all characteristic of diplomatic crises throughout antiquity.⁵²

Linked to the concept of power-transition crisis is the categorization of polities as either revisionist or status-quo states. Status-quo states are those that are satisfied with the existing principles and distribution of resources and status within an interstate system. Revisionist states are those that are dissatisfied and seek to redress the situation in their favor, sometimes diplomatically but often by violence. Conflict between status quo and revisionist states constitutes the dynamic behind power-transition crises.⁵³

50. Konrad von Hotzendorf (Chief of the Austrian General Staff), in von Hotzendorf 1923—the first part of the quote; David Lloyd George (British Chancellor of the Exchequer), in Lloyd George 1933—the second part; Sir Edward Grey (British Foreign Secretary), in Grey 1925—the third part. On the sincerity of these remarks, see the excellent analysis of Holsti 1972: 35. On the sincerity of Grey’s belief that armed interstate anarchy was itself a fundamental cause of World War I, see French 1986: 190–91.

51. See Levy 1991: 261.

52. On the pressures toward stereotyped behavior during crises: Wolfers 1962: 13–19; Lebow 1981: esp. chap. 5. On cognitive closure and premature cognitive closure—with an example from antiquity—see Kauppi 1991: 115–16.

53. The distinction between status-quo states and revisionist states derives from Carr 1939, strongly reiterated by Schweller 1994: 72–107, Schweller 1996: 90–121, and Schweller 1998: esp. 19–26. Cf. also Geller and Singer 1998: 65–67 (hesitant). On Carr, see now Jones 1998: esp. chaps. 4 and 7.

Analysts in the power-transition tradition argue, however, that no state is inherently revisionist or status-quo: that is, for the most part we are not describing differences in the natures of different states, nor “national character,” nor even (to put it with more sophistication) national political culture. Rather, revisionism—like adherence to the status quo—is situationally based. Revisionism tends to occur when the distribution of status and resources within an international system is out of congruence with the true balance of power. But while states may support the status quo when it is to their own advantage, Realist theorists also argue that it is rare to find a *pure* status quo state under an interstate anarchy, since the pressures to garner resources for oneself and to deny them to others in such a regime are so severe. Thus almost every state is, under the right circumstances, prepared to adopt at least limited revisionist policies in its own favor.⁵⁴

Under the right circumstances, though, some regimes may go beyond the limited revisionism that is tempting to all. Such states may become “unlimited revisionist” states—so-called revolutionary states. Because such a polity is, for whatever reason, fundamentally dissatisfied with the existing system, the unlimited revisionist state consciously seeks not merely to better its own position within the existing multipolar or bipolar system (as all states seek to do) but to overthrow the system entirely. Its aim is the establishment instead of its own hegemony or empire. It is motivated not only by security-driven revisionism and expansionism (a phenomenon common to all states) but also by *non*-security-driven revisionism and expansionism. Scholars of international relations believe that the unlimited revisionist state is rare; but the cases are famous (e.g., Napoleon, Hitler), the states involved being exceptionally militaristic even for an anarchy, and they cause widespread destruction whether they succeed or fail. Here we may be dealing with the large-scale impact of a special pathology within an individual unit of the system.⁵⁵

This sort of “pathological” explanation for the rise of a hegemonic state has existed in the modern study of imperial expansion from the time of the pioneering work of John A. Hobson (for Victorian Britain) right down to the influential Fritz Fischer (for Wilhelmine Germany) and

54. See Wolfers 1962: 84–86, and 125; Aron 1973: 75; Glaser 1992: 501 and n. 4; cf. Taliaferro 2000: 129.

55. “Non-security-driven expansion” is expansion originating in a state’s desire to increase its wealth, territory, or prestige when this is unnecessary for increasing a state’s security: see Glaser 1992: 501; Schweller 1998: 5. The classic discussion of the aims of revolutionary states is Kissinger 1957.

William Appleman Williams (for the United States in the twentieth century).⁵⁶ This is a widespread and, one might say, instinctive response in the modern historical discipline, because graduate study is so often based on the intensive examination of a single country. Political scientists have a specific term for this approach: the “unit-attribute theory” of the origin of empire. Under unit-attribute theory, internal forces within a state are what produce most external (international) outcomes, and the interstate system, if it is thought of at all, is taken to be merely an outcome of those internal forces.⁵⁷ And what political scientists term “unit-attribute theory” has, naturally enough, been applied by historians not merely to modern states but especially to explain the rise of Rome: there is a strong tendency within Roman studies to believe that Republican Rome was, in essence and from the time of its origins, an unlimited revisionist state.⁵⁸

That the internal characteristics of the units that make up the interstate system (i.e., the individual states) can contribute to the prevalence of war and expansion is not denied even by Waltz, the scholar willing to attribute the most power to systemic structure: “Beyond the survival motive, the aims of states may be endlessly varied: they may range from the ambition to conquer the world to the desire merely to be left alone”; “structures shape and shove; they do not determine the actions of states.”⁵⁹ Similarly, it stands to reason that deep differences in culture—for example, differences in ideals of behavior—may exacerbate (or perhaps somewhat mollify) the pressures on states created by systemic anarchy. That is: culture can make cooperation and compromise between polities—which is always difficult under an anarchic system—either somewhat more difficult or somewhat less so.⁶⁰

56. Hobson 1902, attributing post-1870 British imperialism to distortions within the British economy, is the founding document here—strongly seconded by Lenin in World War I. Schumpeter 1952 (published in German in 1919) posits causative internal social distortions for late nineteenth-century European imperialism and World War I very different from those in Hobson and Lenin, but equally influential. Fischer on Wilhemine Germany: Fischer 1964 and Fischer 1969. Williams on the United States: Williams 1962 (cf., e.g., Chomsky 1978 and Bacevich 2002).

57. The fundamental critical discussion of unit-attribute theory is Waltz 1979: 18–37 and 61–67.

58. The classic text is Harris 1979, which has gained a wide following. See chap. 1 above and chap. 6 below.

59. Waltz 2000: 13 and 24 (the second quote); Waltz 1979: 61, 91 (the first quote), and 124.

60. See text below at nn. 79 and 80 (on medieval Europe), chap. 3 (on Classical Greece), chap. 4 (on the Hellenistic states), and chap. 5 (on the states of Italy and the western Mediterranean).

The present study, however, emphasizes the severe pressures upon *all* ancient states caused by the anarchic interstate system in which they were forced to exist. That includes the Republic of Rome. In this sense, examination of the characteristics of the anarchic structure of interstate relations in antiquity, and of the responses of states to it, imposes an important control on explanations drawn from the unit level. The method does not obviate the search for unit-level variables that help explain international outcomes. But it suggests that those unit-level variables may have more to do with capabilities than with motives—for the motives of all states are similar, and arise primarily from the rigors of a hazardous environment.

Here it is striking that little statistical association has been found by modern researchers between most internal attributes of states (e.g., regime type, internal instability, and even “national culture”) and their tendency toward war: “with few exceptions, the findings do not indicate a substantive association between the attributes of states and their tendencies towards war-proneness.”⁶¹ One condition that does show a correlation with increasing frequency of engagement in war is the extent of a state’s geographical size (i.e., the number and length of frontiers), plus the number of alliances it possesses. Yet this finding simply means that there is a positive correlation between the intensity of a state’s involvement in the outside world and the frequency of its wars with the outside world.⁶²

Thus whatever their internal structures, a strong argument exists that the nature of the interstate environment forces all states alike into the same militarized, warlike, and expansionist direction. As Waltz proposes, such an environment pushes all states into becoming functionally similar units: they differ in capabilities but not in ends.⁶³ And here we should underline the fact that *every* major power in the ancient world (as well as every second-rank power, and many a small and insignificant polity as well) was highly militarized—just like Rome.⁶⁴

The conceptual richness of Realist thought on the structures of interstate politics suggests the potential explanatory power that a theoretically informed discussion of the emergence of Rome into preponderance in the Mediterranean multipolar system of states could bring to our under-

61. Geller and Singer 1998: 47 (the quote), 50, 51, 67 (statistical examples of internal attributes).

62. Ibid. 48 and 67.

63. Waltz 1979: 96–97.

64. Waltz’s rule that every state is pushed by the system into emulation of the most ruthlessly successful has been borne out in historical case studies; e.g.: Resende and Santos 1996: 193–260. On the intense militarization and militarism of states in the ancient world, see below, chaps. 3–5.

standing of this central development in ancient history. Since the ancient history writers themselves focus so heavily on describing the course and character of interstate relations—a topic that they view as of central importance in human history—the failure of modern historians of Rome to apply the theoretical approach offered by international-relations studies is remarkable and unfortunate. It bespeaks (one must say) the isolated nature of ancient studies.

CRITIQUES OF REALIST THEORY

Although the Realist approach to analyzing international relations is an important approach in the field, in recent years it has not gone uncriticized. The criticisms vary in merit, but some are serious.

Modern Realist thinking rose to its current intellectual prominence as a pessimistic response first to the circumstances surrounding the outbreak of World War I, but then even more strongly as a response to the terrible international events of the 1930s, which were followed by the cataclysm of World War II, and then the onset and long persistence of the Cold War despite many diplomatic efforts at detente.⁶⁵ These grim international developments seemed to demonstrate that the other major approaches to the study of international relations—Groatian legalism; Wilsonian liberal institutionalism and idealism; Marxist economism—were inadequate and even naive instruments of analysis.⁶⁶ Conversely, however, the peaceful denouement of the Cold War, and the relatively high level of interstate cooperation that accompanied it (1989–91), led in the 1990s to a resurgence in liberal-institutionalist (“Neoliberal”) theories of international relations. Liberal institutionalists in the post–Cold War period accused Realism of having an overly pessimistic view of the nature of interstate relations, and indeed of human nature itself. They argued that Realist paradigms of interstate behavior tend to underestimate the extent of consensual community and of interdependence and cooperation that can and does exist among states, and to underestimate the desire for peace.⁶⁷

65. Sociointellectual history of Realism: Guzzini 1998; cf. Kahler 1997: 20–53.

66. Hope in international law (deriving from Grotius in the seventeenth century) and in international institutions of cooperation and mediation (deriving from the post–World War I League of Nations) have never fully recovered from the events leading to World War II; cf. Taylor 1978: 130: “The lesson of the 1930s was that state behaviour could not be reformed.” Example of the failure of Marxist economism: Stalin’s belief that competing capitalist states could not form an enduring alliance even in the face of the Soviet strategic threat; see Gaddis 1997b: 195–97.

67. See Kegley 1993: 131–47, and the essays in Baldwin 1993, and in Kegley 1995.

Realists have responded vigorously to the Cold War issue. They argue that perceived national interest and little else—certainly not altruism—determined state actions between 1989 and 1991, and that the relative success and smooth working of international institutions in the 1990s merely reflected the fact that they were supported by (and were useful to) the overwhelming power and prestige of the United States.⁶⁸ Waltz has further argued that international institutions (such as the United Nations organization) have no independent existence or power apart from the individual polities that constitute their membership, and that within those international institutions each polity fiercely pursues its own interests.⁶⁹ And the reemergence of a more internationally assertive Russia at the turn of the millennium, as well as the rise in power of an increasingly nationalistic and militarized China, raise new questions—or rather, the same old questions—about the persistence, pervasiveness, and ferocity of international competition.⁷⁰

A second important recent criticism of Realist theory has been that it tends to depict states too abstractly, with all states as interchangeable parts within a mechanistic model—the so-called structure or system—that is almost totally determinative of their behavior. But human beings have independence and will, human societies differ sharply one from another, and those societies have specific internal politics and culture. All states may exist within a structural anarchy, but not all states are the same: even some Realist theoreticians, as we have seen, postulate that (for whatever reasons) some states are more aggressive than others and that this fact should be taken into account in the depiction of interstate politics.⁷¹ Further, it is argued that states are actually collectivities of vast complexity but that Realists treat them as if they were discrete, whole individuals making rational decisions; some Realists even treat international relations as if it were a branch of mechanical physics, with states reacting against one another like billiard balls. Yet such approaches ignore the fact that no state is an individual. Rather, each state is riddled with competing internal interest-groups, pressures, and internal conflicts of interest—a situation that sometimes leads to conflicted and even in-

68. Defenses of Realism against Neoliberalism: Mearsheimer 1995; Wohlforth 1994/1995 and Wohlforth 1998; Waltz 2000.

69. Waltz 2000: 15–18.

70. Regarding the return of Russia, see already the warning of Glaser 1992: 533–34: “There is little justification for confidence that Russia will remain indefinitely immune to the pressures created by the international anarchy.”

71. On status-quo vs. revisionist states in Realist theory, see text above at n. 55.

coherent policy.⁷² Hence recent studies stress the importance of complex internal factors in state decisions regarding foreign policy, as well as the inadequacy of Realist theories alone to present a satisfying explanation of such foreign policy.⁷³

These are serious criticisms. In response, Realist scholars have stressed their acceptance that important internal factors (culture, political divisions, even individual decision makers) have an impact upon external policy.⁷⁴ Yet Realism does adopt an essentially sociological approach to state behavior, and partakes of the sociologist's distaste for assigning individual responsibility for historical events. So Realist theoreticians may agree that states are, after all, the acting units of history, and that their internal characteristics count—but meanwhile they reassert the causal primacy of the pressures from the characteristics of the international system. Some Realists also argue that since the theory is concerned to analyze long-term structural pressures, it does not have to provide primary explanations for specific state decisions.⁷⁵ And certainly the accusation that Realism posits state decisions that are too rational misses a central point of the Realist argument: that states (i.e., their decision-making elites) are heavily if subtly socialized by their environment and previous experience into making certain kinds of decisions that to a neutral observer may not appear completely rational.⁷⁶ Similarly a central Realist tenet is that this socialization process results in a bias toward pessimism, the clearest example being fear of the “worst-case scenario”—even when such scenarios may appear to a neutral observer as unlikely.⁷⁷ A further purportedly irrational element in state decision making recognized by Realists is a strong tendency for states to repeat the kinds of decisions that have worked well in the past—their “adaptive path” in the environment—no matter what the present circumstances might actually require.⁷⁸

A third major criticism of Realism has recently emerged—a version of “the linguistic turn” that has affected so many scholarly fields. Inter-

72. The comparison to physics is accepted by Schuman 1974: 272; cf. Gilpin 1988: 594. Criticism stressing the complexity and conflicted internal nature of politics: Levy 1988: 553–73; Snyder 1991.

73. See Snyder 1991; Kupchan 1994; Schroeder 1994; Schroeder 1997.

74. See Zakaria 1992; Waltz 2000: esp. 24.

75. See esp. Waltz 1996; Wohlforth 2001.

76. See Waltz 1979: 74–77 and 127–28; cf. Wohlforth 2001: 215.

77. Brooks 1997: 454. Example: see text above at n. 24.

78. On the impact of “path dependency”, see Pierson 2000; Wohlforth 2001. Waltz (1979: 131; 1986: 118) explicitly denies that Realism posits rational state decision making. Nevertheless, most Realists also view harsh state conduct as a quite reasonable response to competitive anarchy—i.e., it is in general adaptive.

national relations Constructivists now argue that Realist theories, rather than being sober and sobering reflections of harsh real-world problems, constitute instead an artificial and arbitrary discourse of competition and violence. This violent discourse has itself a detrimental effect on the international system, because of its destructive impact upon the expectations and perceptions of statesmen—and thus, eventually, on their actions. Thus the harsh paradigms of Realist discourse constitute a self-fulfilling prophecy. But the world of states is not an objective fact, a given that ineluctably forces itself upon its individual units; rather, it is a world socially constructed by human beings acting upon specific ideas. The interstate system may be an anarchy without a guiding authority or effective means of enforcing international law, but “anarchy is what you make of it,” and the pessimistic theorizing of Realism can and should be combatted, replaced by a new communitarian discourse of interstate relations. Once this replacement of discourses occurs, such a communitarian discourse of international relations might in turn construct a new and more benign international environment—as, Constructivists argue, similar communitarian discourses have accomplished in the past, especially in the Middle Ages.⁷⁹

Realists, while acknowledging the impact of discourse upon state action, have answered that this line of thinking gives too much power to words. Thus Markus Fischer has offered strong evidence that the prevailing medieval “communitarian discourse” had little actual impact on the rivalrous and warlike real-world actions of medieval states.⁸⁰ Moreover, the originators of Constructivism were mostly American scholars writing in the 1990s, not only in a world that the United States dominated but within a society that (extraordinarily in history) had little experience of what it felt like to be acted upon violently and decisively by the outside, by others. Only intellectuals ensconced in the safety of that American world of the 1990s, of expected—or rather, unconsciously assumed—complete security before Sept. 11, 2001, could have doubted that a state’s need to establish security against a rivalrous and hostile world was a real need, and not merely a matter of “destructive discourse.”

79. The classic statement of the Social Constructivist argument: Wendt 1992: 391–425; and now Wendt 1999; cf. also Vasquez 1999: esp. 86.

80. Fischer 1992 (a close study of the Mâconnais region). Similarly, Zhang (2001: 50–51) notes the sharp contradiction in the Chinese period of Warring States (475–221 B.C.) between the widespread cultural discourse of Confucian harmony and the actual record of multipolar belligerency, warfare, and imperial expansion. Criticism of Constructivism in general: see Mearsheimer 1995: esp. 37–47.

Realism, of course, emphasizes the powerful impact of the perception and experience of vulnerability upon all states' actions.⁸¹

A CRUCIAL ROMAN UNIT ATTRIBUTE

This study will underline the causal role of the anarchic characteristics of the interstate systems of the ancient Mediterranean in pushing the vast majority of ancient states into being very bellicose, expansionist in aim, diplomatically aggressive, and prone to solving serious interstate conflicts of interest by the normal way in which such conflicts are solved under anarchy—namely war. But the point in emphasizing the pressures placed by the environment upon all these states, both in the Classical and in the Hellenistic period, and including the Republic of Rome, is to correct the almost complete absence in current scholarly analysis of this key factor in interstate relations in antiquity. It is not my purpose to attribute near omnipotence to the characteristics of the state system in determining events. No modern theorist of international relations believes in such a monocausal explanatory scheme. Rather, my purpose is to urge the prominent inclusion of the characteristics of the anarchic state-systems within which all polities in Mediterranean antiquity existed as an important factor among several factors—and hitherto a neglected factor—in fostering our understanding of trends in state conduct over the long term.

In this respect, here at the outset I note that in chapter 7 I lay detailed emphasis on—precisely—a factor internal to Roman society (i.e., a unit-level factor) as probably the single most important element in explaining Roman success within the Romans' harsh environment. But what I emphasize will not be the unit-level factor stressed by most scholars of Roman expansion—exceptional Roman warlikeness and bellicosity. This alleged characteristic of Roman internal society has over the past twenty-five years become the standard scholarly explanation both for the prevalence of warfare in Roman Republican history (it occurred almost every year) and as well for the eventual success of Roman expansion. The current study is in fact written largely to question this thesis of exceptional Roman bellicosity. The Romans certainly appear to us as strikingly warlike and brutal, and they were certainly warlike and brutal; no one would deny it. But it will be argued here that the Romans' bellicos-

81. Cf. Pelz 1990: 765: "historians do not merely deal with words; they deal with past events that had material results."

ity and brutality cannot be the central explanation for their extraordinary success in the ancient Mediterranean, because the Romans, while brutal and warlike, were not exceptionally warlike within their own environment. That was an environment filled with states that, once we examine them (as we do in chapters 3–6 below), will also turn out to be exceptionally and brutally warlike. But if all these states were exceptionally brutal and warlike, then Roman brutality and warlikeness cannot in itself explain the extraordinary scope of Roman success. Indeed, one important reason why all these states were exceptionally brutal and warlike is that they all (including Rome) were uniformly acting under the severe pressures generated by the harsh and anarchic interstate systems in which they existed. That is: the internal arrangements of states are very strongly influenced by the environments in which they operate.⁸²

Nevertheless, the book argues for the importance of a specific unit-level factor in explaining Roman success—not Roman bellicosity (which was shared with so many ancient states), but the Romans' ability to assimilate non-Romans into the Roman polity, and thus to create a state that was both very large-scale in terms of territory and resources, yet was also socially well integrated. This was not a military but a diplomatic and political skill. In part it meant the literal absorption of large numbers of non-Roman people into the Roman state via the continual extension of various forms of Roman citizenship—which in turn indicates a social flexibility inherent in a changing and evolving Roman identity. In part it meant extraordinary Roman skill at managing an ever increasing network of non-Roman (i.e., foreign) allies. But the ability to assimilate and integrate non-Romans in one way or another into a Rome-centered state structure meant in turn that Rome eventually came to possess an exceptional competitive advantage over other polities in the ferocious struggle for security and power ongoing in the ancient Mediterranean—namely the ability to mobilize very large-scale social resources at a great level of intensity.

Roman intentions intensely favored the expansion of Roman power and influence, but this was no different than the intentions of most other ancient polities—neither in ultimate goal nor, it will be argued here, in intensity (very intense). But the nature of the Roman state and society gave the Romans unusually large resources with which to accomplish that intention, to expand Rome's power and influence—as well as an

82. The fundamental study of this fundamental—and obvious—point is Gourevitch 1978; cf. Downing 1992 and now Jervis 2001: 287.

exceptional ability to withstand the inevitably heavy blows dealt them by their fiercely competitive neighbors. These issues are discussed in detail below, but Theodor Mommsen realized long ago that the extraordinary ability of Rome to assimilate and/or integrate non-Romans into a large and relatively unitary state was the key to Rome's extraordinary success.⁸³

In other words, once we distinguish carefully between the two separate phenomena with which this study is concerned—the prevalence of war in the ancient Mediterranean on the one hand, and the success of Rome on the other—the argument is clearly that we must see the causes of large changes in the interstate structure as the result of the interplay of both system-level and unit-level factors. Nevertheless, the stress here is—and given the condition of scholarly analysis it must be—on acknowledging the previously unacknowledged role of system-level factors, both in the causation of warfare in the ancient Mediterranean and in the rise of Rome to world power.

CONCLUSION

Debate in the field of international relations about the validity of Realist concepts and analysis is now intense. In applying a Realist perspective and Realist paradigms of interstate action to the state-systems that arose in the Mediterranean in general in antiquity and to the crisis in the state-system of the late third and early second centuries B.C. in particular, we will thus be doing more than attempting a theoretically informed analysis of those systems and a theoretically informed narrative of that crisis. We will also be testing Realism itself as a valid heuristic model of the relationships between and among states (especially, of course, ancient states), and hence we will be testing the validity of the recent criticisms of the Realist approach, especially as they relate to conditions in antiquity. Moreover, contemporary Realism claims that its insights into interstate behavior have universal application across the history of state-systems, and indeed extend back to the structural causes of intercommunal violence in the pre-state Neolithic era. If those claims can be shown to have validity for the early period of state-systems in the ancient Mediterranean, this would enhance the stature of Realism as a set of theoretical models of state behavior over time. The following analyses of the characteristics of the successive interstate systems in the ancient Mediterranean there-

83. See Mommsen 1903: 412–30, esp. 428–30; cf. 451–52.

fore form a series of important test cases of the validity of those Realist claims.⁸⁴

What now follows is an examination of the characteristics of interstate relations in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean both in the Classical and in the Hellenistic period, primarily in the eastern Mediterranean but then shifting to Italy and the western Mediterranean. The discussion no doubt suffers from a degree of generalization. On the one hand, however, I hope to draw the attention of modern historians of Mediterranean antiquity to the structural-causal variables in interstate relations that they have tended to neglect in their accounts of Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman warfare and expansion. The claim is not that Realist analysis of the militarized interstate anarchies that existed in antiquity provides a total explanation of war and expansion in the ancient world, but I do argue that additional and important systemic factors existed behind and contributed importantly to those phenomena of constant war and state expansion.⁸⁵ And on the other hand, I will be responding to John Lewis Gaddis's request that historians interested in political science help the political scientists to pinpoint the historical situations and conditions under which the political scientists' lawlike hypotheses are most likely and least likely to apply.⁸⁶ I have already stated my fundamental finding, in chapter 1: while all systems of independent states are competitive, sometimes brutally so, the state-systems that arose in the ancient Mediterranean after about 750 B.C. were exceptionally harsh and unforgiving anarchies—the type of systems where Realist paradigms work best. Further, the grimmest and most pessimistic of Realist paradigms of interstate behavior appear to be confirmed both by the characteristics of the successive ancient Mediterranean state-systems and by the conduct of the units (states) within them.⁸⁷

84. On Realist claims to universal application, see above, chap. 1, text at n. 16.

85. Structural Realist theory as an additive factor in understanding military and diplomatic history: Elman and Elman 1997: 15 and 20.

86. Gaddis, 1987, and Gaddis 1997a. A similar plea: Levy 1991: 261 and n. 120.

87. As Wohlforth (2001: 215) says concerning the specific situation facing early Muscovy: the environment faced by ancient Mediterranean states was "more dangerous and sanguinary" by far than the western European state-system to which scholars of international relations have devoted most of their attention. On significant variations in severity of competition (including the forms taken by power, and the beliefs about appropriate state behavior), see also Jervis 2001: 286.

The Anarchic Structure of Interstate Relations in Classical Greece

Ancient Greek city-states existed in a world that was essentially bereft of international law. The result was a constellation of heavily militarized and diplomatically aggressive societies among which war was common. The character of those societies no doubt contributed to the general atmosphere of interstate violence, but the fact of pervasive interstate war is to be attributed in great part to the prevailing system of militarized anarchy in which all these states had to live, and in which they struggled to survive. Thus it is not surprising that Hellenic intellectuals, in particular Thucydides, were the ultimate founders of the grim Realist view of relations among states under anarchic conditions.

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE GREEK CITY-STATES

The Greek city-state world of the Classical age was, to begin with, always an anarchy under formal definition. That is: states recognized no overarching common government or authority, while international law among them was barely existent.¹

There was, of course, no law in the sense of written and formal rules of conduct and procedure between states that were accepted as obligatory. True, the governments of Greek city-states were reluctant to characterize their own behavior as lawless; and few ever bluntly claimed to

1. See, rightly, e.g., Wight 1977: 50.

be an aggressor.² Moreover, there were some informal customs of interstate conduct. These evidently involved four areas: protection of official envoys (and sometimes other resident aliens) from harm; not attacking neutral states during wartime; minimal protection of the civilian population of the enemy under certain specific circumstances; and abiding by sworn treaties. As has recently been stressed, these informal norms, along with a general reluctance to appear simply lawless and aggressive, went some way to ameliorate the widespread conditions of interstate violence.³

But it is equally clear that these restraints on state conduct were limited in scope⁴—and that, even so, they could not be counted on to be fulfilled. In terms of limited scope, for instance, the immunity from harm customarily granted by one city-state to envoys coming to it from another did not extend to immunity for envoys from third parties crossing its territory; and the protection of resident foreigners occurred only through specific agreements—and otherwise, resident foreigners were at constant risk.⁵ Even more important, however, states violated the above rudimentary norms of conduct—occasionally the first, and often the other three—and they violated them with impunity.

Thus we have record of more than 250 treaties (of friendship; of peace; of alliance) between Greek polities in the Classical period; this certainly represents a very considerable effort to regulate the course of interstate relations by means of diplomacy, as the ancients well understood (see Isocr. *Paneg.* 43).⁶ Yet even with regard to such treaties, sworn before the gods in solemn public ceremonies and then inscribed on stone, acts and accusations of bad faith among the city-states were common. Demosthenes could publicly announce that Greek polities were habitually faithless to each other (*ἀπίστως*, 3 *Phil.* 21); the Corcyreans in Thucydides can say without fear of contradiction that treaties among Greek states retain validity only as long as they are congruent with actual facts of power

2. See Bederman 2001: 276–77.

3. Ibid. 7 and 36; and Kokaz 2001: esp. 91–99.

4. On the severely circumscribed nature of ancient international law in general, see Nörr 1989: 28–41.

5. Fragility of the Greek custom of inviolability of envoys: Mosley 1973: 81–84. Imprisonment or execution of third-party diplomats: Bederman 2001: 113–14. The same was true in China of the contemporary Warring States period: see Zhang 2001: 48 n. 25. The risks to resident aliens, absent specific interstate agreements to protect them: Bederman 2001: 122–29.

6. The list of treaties: Bengtson 1975.

(1.36.1). An atmosphere of distrust was pervasive.⁷ As for neutrality, the latest study concludes that Classical Greek states accepted the legitimacy of that status only under necessity, and “all too often seized the first opportunity to assail non-belligerents.”⁸

The existence of certain informal customs and a limited sense of obligation regarding certain details of conduct among Greek polities somewhat alleviated the interactions between states. But this is not the rule of international law. When, for instance, Nancy Kokaz denies Martin Wight’s claim that the Hellenic system of states had little notion of international law just because in Classical Greece there were no formal rules of interstate conduct and no guarantee or mechanism of enforcement even of the “unwritten rules,” one must wonder what Kokaz’s definition of international law would actually be.⁹ It is a harsh fact that among the poleis there simply was no outside authority, accepted as legitimate, which could impose even limited norms of behavior; and no informal norm had the slightest enforcement-mechanism. This was true even of the great oracular shrine of Apollo at Delphi¹⁰—indeed, the shrine itself was not immune from violence by Greek states (see Diod. 16.23–33: 355 B.C.). Yet for a system of international law to exist, not only must specific laws exist, but there must be some concrete penalty for violating them.¹¹

But when informal norms of conduct (or even formal written agreements) were violated in the Greek world, it was mainly up to the victimized state itself to punish the perpetrator or gain redress, when and if it could. Even powerful states, such as Athens, could be reduced merely to inscribing postscripts on the publicly displayed texts of treaties indicating their violation by the other side (Thuc. 5.56.3). This situation helps explain the stress we see on vengeance in Greek interstate relations—that was one way to regulate state behavior.¹² To be sure, the pragmatic benefit of appearing to be a reliable partner was an important motive for governments to stick to their word.¹³ But other than vengeance taken by

7. Atmosphere of distrust: see Leppin 1999, and even Bederman 2001: 179. Faithlessness: admitted even by Adcock and Mosley 1975: 222, and Bederman 2001: 179; on the instability of Greek treaties see in general: *ibid.* 175–82.

8. Bauslaugh 1991: 253; cf. 36, 52.

9. Kokaz 2001: 95–96, vs. Wight 1978: 50.

10. Despite Kokaz 2001: 96.

11. See Waltz 1979: 102–14; for antiquity, see the comments of Badian 1983: 401–5.

12. See now Lendon 2000.

13. The benefits of appearing reliable: Thuc. 3.54.3; 3.57.1–2; 8.48.1; 8.70.2; cf. 1.42 *passim*.

the victim if it could, the punishment for violation of norms of behavior or even sworn treaties was up to the gods. Again—fear of the gods was sometimes a factor in restraining Greek state behavior.¹⁴ But the gods and their actions were to a great extent inscrutable, while the real-world situations faced by polities were often complex. In terms of adherence to treaties, for instance, it was often possible to find alleged ambiguities in the text—if one wished. The same was true with war: justifications could always be found.¹⁵ But the main point is that all such decisions were made by independent governments. As Thucydides has the statesman Hermocrates of Syracuse say, for every polity the essence of freedom (*eleutheria*) is for that polity to be the sole arbiter of its own destiny (*autokratōr*, 4.63.2; similarly Pericles at 2.61.1). This was a view still powerful even among small states 230 years later, in the second century B.C.; Livy (based on Polybian material), in discussing these small states, takes it for granted.¹⁶ It is therefore not surprising that no powerful ancient state, from the time we have information on them right down to the eventual hegemony of Rome, ever felt constrained to act in the international arena except exactly as it saw fit.¹⁷

The result was an anarchy in the formal sense. Gods needed to be invoked in treaties because the independent polities that made the treaties recognized no overarching authority in the real world to judge disputes between them.¹⁸ And the anarchic situation meant that, in general, tensions among states were constant: quarrels and clashes of interest accumulated, building into serious long-term political conflicts; and those conflicts tended strongly (though of course there were exceptions) to be resolved through force—outright war. There was no international institutional mechanism to prevent it.

Mediation and/or arbitration of disputes via a neutral third party did occur, on an ad hoc basis: some sixty cases are known from the period

14. See Goodman and Holladay 1986: 152–60; cf. Bederman 2001: 49–73.

15. See Wheeler 1984: esp. 255–56. Such sophistry in the handling of treaties is of course not limited to ancient Greek politics and polities: see the bitter comments of Lowes Dickenson 1926: 25–38, cf. 467, on the diplomacy of European states in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dickenson ascribes the sophistry with which treaties were handled (and, when necessary, intentionally misinterpreted or straightforwardly discarded) as due primarily to the pressures of interstate armed anarchy: see esp. 37, cf. 467–68.

16. See Livy 33.38.1–7, with the comments of Ma 2002: 3–4.

17. Badian 1983: 401–5. Thus even Bederman 2001 centers his long discussion of the role of religion on cases where states ignored the gods because of perceived real-world interests. Complexity: see the contradictory appeals to “the customs of the Hellenes” made by the Plataeans and the Thebans at Thuc. 3.56.1–2 vs. 3.67.6. Inscrutability of the gods: see the famous passage at Thuc. 5.104–5 (in the Melian Dialogue).

18. See Weidemann 1986: 487.

750–337 B.C. This, again, represents a very significant Greek effort at peaceful resolution of conflicts—and such recourse to mediation or arbitration did help to alleviate the prevailing violence of interstate competition.¹⁹ Yet entry into arbitration or mediation was always totally voluntary on the part of the states involved, and arose from pragmatic considerations, not from submission to any regime of international law. Hence it was not unusual even for arbitrations mandated by sworn and written peace treaties to fail because of the interlocutors' inability even to find a mutually acceptable arbitrator.²⁰ And sometimes a proposal for arbitration, far from being an attempt at a pacific solution to a conflict, constituted instead merely a propaganda challenge.²¹ Powerful states in particular viewed submission to arbitration as beneath them.²²

In the fourth century, finally, we find an ideology stressing the benefits of a "general peace" (*koinē eirēnē*), a peace treaty to which all Greek states would swear while simultaneously protecting their own autonomy; this was popular among intellectuals as a way out of the continual interstate violence. There were several attempts to institute such a peace: in 387/386 B.C. (the "King's Peace"), 375, 371 (twice), 362/361, and 338/337 (the League of Corinth). But in two cases (the "King's Peace" and the League of Corinth), the attempt at a *koinē eirēnē* was viewed by most states as a façade behind which lurked the domination of the Hellenes by an outside great power: the Persian empire in the first instance, the Kingdom of Macedon in the second; and this was bitterly resented.²³ Moreover, what is striking is that even with the backing of a great power such efforts did not last; they failed as a practical matter either to prevent wars or to stabilize relations among the poleis, and never developed any permanent institutions capable of peaceably resolving conflicts between states.²⁴

In sum: informal customs of conduct among the Greek polities served somewhat to mitigate the violence of the interstate anarchy. But there was no international law. Restraint on state action occurred for pragmatic reasons, or fear of the gods (which was, in the Greek view, also a pragmatic reason); and informal customs of state conduct were just that—

19. See Piccirilli 1973.

20. See the comments of Hornblower 1996: s.v. "Arbitration (Greek)".

21. Adcock and Mosley 1975: 138.

22. Badian 1983: 402; cf. Eckstein 1988: 415–16.

23. The classic exposition of resentment is Isocrates' anti-Persian and anti-Spartan pamphlet *Panegyricus* (380 B.C.).

24. See the bitter judgment of Jehne 1994: 26–29 and 270–84. Earlier: Ryder 1965: 119.

informal, and without means of enforcement. The sense of obligation of one Greek polity to another was minimal. The result, as Michael Rostovtzeff concluded long ago, was that in regard to the most important interstate issues, “in the ancient world, the sole deciding force was might.” This was the basic fact of international life.²⁵

INTERPOLIS WARFARE AS A CONSTANT

Contemporary writers among the Greeks were well aware of the chaos caused by constant rivalry and war among the multitude of poleis that constituted the Greek political world. Usually veterans of war themselves, they wrote for an audience of veterans.²⁶ These writers noted that there was no one to restrain the actions of the poleis, that war among them was a prevalent condition, and that peace (i.e., the absence of armed conflict or the prospect of it) was a quite unusual condition. And they described the diplomatic discourse employed by the poleis as focused upon mutual threats of violence. In Herodotus, the earliest Greek historian, the verb *katastrephein*, “to conquer,” appears fully sixty-five times, describing one polity subjugating another; Herodotus also notes that not even Persian hegemony in Ionia could prevent the Greek cities from raiding each other, until the Persians in exasperation established by force the arbitration of disputes (6.42). Thucydides of course is famous for the depiction of continuous interstate chaos and violence (see below); Xenophon concludes his continuation of Thucydides’ work in despair at the continual disorder of Greek interstate life (*Hell.* 7.5.27)—while taking it as natural that the victor will subjugate the vanquished (7.5.26). Demosthenes agrees in underlining how much the Greek states were prone to mutual strife (3 *Phil.* 2.1). Such conditions explain the statement of the Theban general Epaminondas (Plut. *Mor.* 193E): his city could not hope to maintain its power if its citizens did not maintain hold of their handgrips (i.e., the grips of their shields). And hence the Spartan maxim that the borders of a polity were “as far as a spear can reach” (Plut. *Mor.* 210C).²⁷

25. Rostovtzeff 1922: 43; similar conclusion in Larsen 1962: 233–34; and Jehne 1994: 271. By contrast Kokaz (2001: 95–96) is confident that Greek interstate relations “embodied various normative institutions and practices to regulate the pursuit of power”—including, we are told, the Olympic Games.

26. See Hanson 1989: 21, 45, and 46.

27. Thucydides’ perception of constant Greek warfare: see 1.2.2–3 and 6; 1.5.1 and 3; 1.7; 1.18, with the comments of Gilpin, 1988: 597. The Greeks, of course, were not alone in waging constant war: see Hdt. 7.8. Predominant diplomatic discourse one of force: see below.

Under such conditions, as Jacqueline de Romilly concludes, “la guerre est non seulement, dans la Grèce des cités, une fonction normale, mais un état normal,” and the Greek word for peace meant “truce”: one concluded a temporary peace.²⁸ Moses Finley’s conclusion is similar: for the Classical Greeks “war was a normal part of life.” And John Ma has recently reached the same conclusion: local warfare among Greek city-states was, to quote him, “normal” throughout the entire Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods.²⁹ The situation is emphasized even in the more advanced textbooks: “For fifth-century Greeks, war was a permanent condition of life, fought almost annually. . . . Battles were for the most part fought against other Greeks, usually to assert political dominance over others. . . . To reject the idea of conflict with external enemies would have seemed perfectly incredible.”³⁰

All these statements are, of course, reminiscent of Kenneth Waltz’s famous dictum concerning the life of states under anarchy: within an anarchic system “the state among states conducts its affairs in the brooding shadow of violence. . . . Among states, the state of nature is a state of war”; within an anarchic system, “war is normal.”³¹

Under these grim conditions, it was natural that most city-states would develop highly militarized traditions; the system forced them in that direction.³² This was as true of Athens as it was more famously of Sparta. Spartans served in the army from adolescence until age sixty, and as R. T. Ridley points out, the amount of military service that Athenian citizens of official hoplite status owed the Athenian state was far more onerous than what any citizen owed at Rome.³³ Moreover, it is significant that in almost every campaign those hoplites who owed conscripted service from the “hoplite list” (*katalogos*) were joined by substantial numbers of volunteer hoplites (perhaps of somewhat lesser social status).³⁴ And

28. De Romilly 1968: 207; cf. also Veyne 1975: 800–801.

29. Finley 1991: 67; Ma 2000: 338. So too Grant 1965: 262; Woodhead 1970: 129; Hanson 1989: 219.

30. Joint Association of Classical Teachers (hereafter JACT) 1990: 244.

31. Waltz’s hypothesis: above, chap. 2, text at n. 45.

32. For the political-science theorizing on the relationship here between system phenomena and adaptive internal culture, see above, chap. 2, n. 82.

33. Athens’ militarized tradition: Ridley 1979: 508–48. Xenophon’s study of Spartan society presents every single aspect of it as focused on the production of good soldiers and success in war: see Crane 1998: 85–92. Yet Pericles’ Funeral Oration (Thuc. 2.35–46) partakes of the same agonistic spirit: see Loraux 1986: 202–20.

34. Volunteers: Thuc. 8.24.2; Ar. *Knights*, 1369–70; Lysias 9.4 and 15, and 14.6; Diod. 11.84.4, with Gabrielsen 2002: 92 and n. 22.

evidence suggests that although ancient history writers concentrated on hoplites, military service in Greek poleis went far down the social scale during wartime.³⁵ From the eighth into the fourth centuries the citizenry generally provided their own weapons and equipment, and in Greek city-states there were retail shops specializing solely in weapons, often expensive ones.³⁶ In many states, laws made the possession of military equipment by citizens compulsory.³⁷ At Athens, male citizen orphans when they reached adulthood received, in a great public ceremony, the state gift of war equipment.³⁸ Greek philosophers appear unaware of the issue of conscientious objection to military service, nor do Greek military analysts worry about self-inflicted wounds to escape it, nor is there consideration of exemption from the military on account of middle age or physical disability: these issues simply do not arise.³⁹ Even Plato's ideal republic was constructed in part to deal with the expected threats and perils of war, and for the very same reason widespread military training was a feature of the ideal republic envisioned by Aristotle (*Pol.* 1329a).⁴⁰ Nor is it surprising that political philosophers would construct their ideal republics in such a fashion. Thus Plato believed that the interstate environment was one of grim competition (*Laws* 626A): "Even what most men call peace is but a name. The reality is that every state, by a law of nature, is engaged at all times in an undeclared war against every other state." As Finley points out, no one in antiquity—no one—disputed this statement.⁴¹

It is true and very important that Plato himself in this same essay wished that this condition of a war of all against all did not exist among the Greeks: as the Athenian Stranger says, it would be better and more rational if people lived in peace and mutual community (*Laws* 627C). But this does not change the fact that Plato acknowledged that in the world as it was, continuous, bitter, and often violent rivalry among the poleis was the norm.⁴² Similarly, Xenophon at the end of the *Hellenica* clearly believes that there

35. See now van Wees 2001: esp. 59–61.

36. Ar. *Peace*, 1209–64; Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.17 (Ephesus); Lys. 12.19; Demosth. 27.9. The arms dealer Pasion at one point donated a thousand shields from his workshops to the Athenian state; Demosth. 45.85.

37. Aen. Tact. 10.7; Hecataeus, *FGrHist* 264 F 25. On both these points, see van Wees 2002: 61–62.

38. See Raaflaub 2001: 107 and n. 75 (with sources).

39. Hansen 1989: 223.

40. See Purnell 1978: 27.

41. Finley 1991: 67 and n. 2.

42. Similar sentiments on the true nature of "peace" can be found at Demosth. 3 *Phil.* 8 and 10–14, and *Chers.* 59. Purnell 1978: 27: "Plato nowhere supposed that war was

ought to be order among the Greek states—but the *Hellenica* is an account of forty-two years of almost continuous war among them (404–362 B.C.). If Xenophon's history ends here on a despairing note (7.5.26–27: see above), it is because *ought* is not the same as *is*.

This was a world in which the citizens of the small town of Cleitor in the Peloponnese could proudly boast, in a dedication to the gods at Olympia, of the violence they had inflicted upon many cities (Paus. 5.23.7)—and Pericles could make the same boast on behalf of Athens before the Athenian Assembly (Thuc. 2.141.4). Indeed, the ability to inflict massive violence on others appears to have been a basic element in the self-identity of the Greek city-state as an institution—which makes sense, given the threatening environment.⁴³

Some scholars have argued that this picture is overblown. In particular, W. R. Connor has suggested that our impression of warfare as endemic in the Greek world is exaggerated because of its prominence as a theme in ancient rhetoricians and historians: in the Archaic and early Classical period war for many states was not frequent, and in any case its main purpose was to express symbolically the domination of the hoplite class of small landowners within each state. That is: Greek warfare in general and hoplite battle in particular were neither constant nor primarily the result of interstate rivalry for resources, prestige, and hence security. Connor builds his case on two foundations: the early history of the Athenian state, and the implication of statistics of losses in hoplite battle.⁴⁴

Even if it could be shown that early Athens seldom engaged in war, this would be only one major state among other major states that we do know engaged in frequent warfare in this period (as Connor admits).⁴⁵ Moreover, our sources are sparse even for early Athens, and in dealing with an ill-documented age one must be careful when employing an argument *ex silentio*.⁴⁶ If sources suggest frequent warfare among other

an abnormality." This view of interstate life was not limited to the Greeks; see Tac. *Hist.* 4.74 (speech of Cerialis): *nam pulsus Romanis . . . quid aliud quam bella omnium inter se gentium existent?*

43. See Ma 2000: 338, 351, 357, 359, 362; cf. Grant 1965: 262 and n. 2.

44. Connor 1988: 1–29. Athens: 6, based on Frost 1984: 283–94. Casualty figures: 21–22, based on Krentz 1985: 13–20.

45. Connor 1988: 7 and n. 19, noting the lengthy conflicts between Thebes and Tanagra, Corona, and Thespieae (Hdt. 5.79), and the lengthy Spartan conflicts with the Arcadian cities in the sixth century, especially Tegea (Hdt. 1.67); add the long Spartan wars with their neighbors the Messenians in the eighth and seventh centuries.

46. Hence Connor (1988: 7) adduces Elis as a tranquil state on the basis of the brief Diod. 8.1.3; but we know little about Elis in this period, while in the Classical and Hell-

major Archaic and early Classical states elsewhere in Greece, why should Athens have been different?

In fact, it is not clear that Athens was different. The struggle in the eighth century to unify the Attic peninsula under Athenian leadership involved significant fighting, including major war with Eleusis. By the 630s it appears that Athens had a central institution for mobilizing cavalry and warships, the forty-eight *naucrariai*.⁴⁷ It seems unlikely that organized conscription and mobilization of infantry via the hoplite list (*katalogos*) had to wait for many generations thereafter.⁴⁸ In 610 an Athenian expedition to found Sigeum on the Gallipoli peninsula involved Athens in a long war with Mytilene. It was in this war that Alcaeus wrote his famous poem about throwing away his shield in hoplite battle—he ran from the Athenians. In the 590s the Athenians seized the island of Salamis, which involved Athens in a long war with Megara. In the same period Athenian forces fought in the First Sacred War, near Delphi. In the 560s the Athenians seized the Megarian town of Nisaea, which led Athens to a second long war with Megara. Under the tyrant Peisistratus from the 540s there were new expeditions to Sigeum, and to the middle Aegean (Naxos); in the same period Miltiades used Athenian volunteer forces to conquer most of the Thracian Chersonese (Gallipoli). In 519 an Athenian army coming to the rescue of Plataea (which had pleaded for help against Thebes) badly defeated the Thebans. In 509 the Athenian hoplites drove the redoubtable Spartans from their stronghold on the Acropolis, and thus established the democracy.⁴⁹

The external military efforts of Athens, as opposed to self-defense efforts, may have been organized more informally than the annual mustering of hoplite infantry we find in Athens from the 540s (see [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 15.4–5). But the apparently more informal organization of these external military efforts should not detract from the fact that almost all of them were officially authorized in one way or another by the state. That hardly suggests that Athens was peaceable. Herodotus ranks Athens with Sparta in the mid-sixth century as one of the two most powerful Greek polities (1.56), and this cannot have happened overnight; his evaluation of the Athenians as soldiers in comparison with their

enistic periods Elis was involved in every major war in the Peloponnese, its army led by a famous crack infantry regiment (Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.13; 7.16.31).

47. See Pollux, *Onom.* 8.108, with Figuera 1986: 257–79; cf. van Wees 2002: 67.

48. Cf. van Wees 2002: 67.

49. For details and sources, see Frost 1964: 286–92.

neighbors (5.78) assumes that Athenians were used to war in the sixth century.

The implications of Peter Krentz's statistics on hoplite battle (an average of 5% losses for the victors, 14% for the defeated) reveals how heavily the burden of war lay upon Greek cities. But it does not follow that frequent warfare under such conditions would lead the citizen population to disappear.⁵⁰ Percentages of losses among the victors mean a 95% survival rate, and this means that for victors the new cohorts of male citizens reaching military age every year would have kept up army numbers. The losses in the losing army were more severe (an average 86% survival rate), but even these heavier losses were not irreplaceable as new cohorts came of age. The story of Thespieae in Boeotia shows we need to be careful here: in 424 the entire field army of Thespieae was wiped out in battle, a devastating event (Thuc. 4.133.1)—but this disaster broke neither Thespian military spirit nor their long-term ability to wage war, for thirty years later we find the Thespians playing a valiant role at the battle of the Nemea (Xen. *Hell.* 4.2.20). Corinth suffered severe losses against Athens near Megara in 457 (Thuc. 1.106.2); yet the greater part of the Corinthian army escaped the calamity (*ibid.*), and Corinthian aggressive spirit was not broken (shown in 447: Thuc. 1.114.1). Again, in the years between 435 and 421 B.C. the Corinthians fought annually on land and sea (first against Corcyra, then in the Peloponnesian War); yet despite substantial citizen losses even when victorious in battle, in 421 the Corinthians wanted to continue the fighting.⁵¹

Thus Krentz's statistics need not be interpreted as casting doubt on our sources' insistence that warfare was endemic in Greece. Thucydides is explicit that warfare was frequent in the Archaic period, though the balance of power among Greek polities changed little (1.15). And in the better-known period from 497 down to 338—that is, for more than a century and a half—scholars calculate that Athens was at war in two out of every three years, and possibly in three out of every four.⁵²

In terms of international-relations theory, one can describe the general history of the states of European Greece in the following manner. The interstate structure was a militarized and multipolar anarchy, in which a vast multiplicity of states fiercely guarded their autonomy and freedom

50. Despite Connor 1988: 21–22.

51. See Thuc. 5.17.2, 25.1, and 27.2. On the strenuous Corinthian war effort during the Peloponnesian War, see Salmon 1984: 324–41.

52. See JACT 1990: 246.

of international action as they struggled against one another for survival and security. Security was scarce: “a utopian ideal.”⁵³ Within this multiplicity of independent states a succession of powerful polities rose toward positions of dominance but did not achieve it. In the sixth century, Sparta, with its Peloponnesian League, was the central state in Greek politics, though many states pursued independent policies and it would be wrong to speak of unipolarity.⁵⁴ In the fifth century, Spartan power and influence was challenged by Athens, and from about 470 the Greek world was in essence divided between allies of Athens and allies of Sparta: a condition of bitterly rivalrous bipolarity. But again, fundamental bipolarity was complicated by the fact that powerful states such as Corcyra, Argos, and Corinth were well able to play independent (often destructive) roles within the system.⁵⁵ Spartan victory in the Peloponnesian War led to a momentary situation of true unipolarity among the Greek states. But Sparta did not have the human or material resources to maintain such a position for long, or to enforce order on the poleis, and Greek geopolitics quickly devolved back into war-prone multipolarity, with Sparta, Athens, and Thebes the major powers, along with many secondary powers. If anything, the fourth century was—and was perceived as being—more chaotic than the fifth. This is clear from both Xenophon and Ephorus.⁵⁶

THUCYDIDEAN REALISM

It was in reaction to this militarized anarchy among the Greek states that Thucydides, in writing his *History of the Peloponnesian War* at the end of the fifth century B.C., became the founder of the original realist school of thought about interstate relations. Most modern Realist thinkers in fact claim Thucydides as their intellectual ancestor, arguing that their worldview sprang into human consciousness as a reasonable intellectual reaction to the emergence of true interstate politics more than twenty-

53. The comment of Veyne 1975: 801.

54. Persistent Greek multipolarity is underlined by Connor 1991: 55–60.

55. Thucydides saw the situation as essentially bipolar (1.1 and 18.3; 3.82.1), though his account also stresses the complexities of Greek interstate politics. Fliess (1966: 16–20) argues that between 470 and 411 the existence of the Persian empire did not disrupt an (essentially) bipolar Greek system since the Persians remained out of Greek politics. Lebow (1991: 147–49) and Kauppi (1991: 110) argue that Classical Greece never reached a situation of true bipolarity, and would have been more stable if it had.

56. See the comments of Buckler 1980: 1–3; Jehne 1994: 7–13; cf. Wickersham 1994: esp. chaps. 3 and 4. On the geopolitical lack of focus characteristic of Xenophon’s narrative, see Gray 1989: 178–80.

five hundred years ago.⁵⁷ Indeed, Thucydides appears to have expounded in detail three of the main principles that inform contemporary Realist theory. Given the harsh nature of relations among the Greek poleis, this is not accidental.

In what follows, however, one should emphasize that while Thucydides stands out from his contemporaries for the quality and clarity of his exposition, his perception of the brutal nature of the Greek interstate world was hardly unique. On the contrary (as we have seen above), Thucydides' ideas should be seen within the context of similar perceptions about interstate politics offered—usually in a less thorough and systematic way—by Herodotus, Xenophon, and Plato.

First, Thucydides thought that all states in a militarized interstate anarchy tended to act in a similar fashion, namely on the basis of brutal self-interest—a fact that in turn made the anarchy very dangerous for all sides:

We know well that by a law of nature men always rule wherever they can. We did not make this law—nor were we the first to act upon it when it was made. On the contrary: we found it already in existence, and we expect to leave it in existence for all time. We are but acting upon it, and we know that you and others, if you had the same power as we have, would act as we are doing. . . . Self-interest goes hand in hand with the achievement of safety [*ἀσφάλεια*], whereas justice and honor are practiced with danger.

Thuc. 5.105.2; 107

This is, of course, the famous statement of the Athenians to the Melians in 416 B.C., when the Athenians were attempting to force Melos into their empire. The Melians disregarded the Athenians' advice, resisted inclusion in the Athenians' empire, and—trusting in divine justice and hoping for help from Sparta (neither of which arrived)—they were destroyed (5.116).

One must stress that Thucydides appears to have had strong moral reservations about the harsh *Realpolitik* enunciated by the Athenians in this famous passage; but (like Xenophon and Plato) he had arrived at an empirical conclusion as to how states in general actually act.⁵⁸ The world of states Thucydides describes is unforgiving and dangerous. In it, every state must depend solely upon itself in order to survive (5.105.3; 113),

57. See Waltz 1979: 66, cf. 127 and 186–87; Gilpin 1980: 93 and 226–27, and Gilpin 1988: 592–606; Doyle 1991: 181–82; Kauppi 1991: 102; Lebow 1991: 125. Classicists, with some reservations, accept the claim: see Crane 1998: esp. chap. 2; Eckstein 2003.

58. Moral reservations: see, e.g., Cohen 1984: 37; Doyle 1991: 172–73; Johnson Bagby 1994: 133–34; Rahe 1996: 106–41; cf. Crane 1998: 64 and n. 63.

and all states act alike in seeking power and influence—primarily, though not exclusively, as a means of survival (see 1.75–76). The hypothesis that all states, irrespective of size or internal organization, act in the same self-aggrandizing fashion is the basis of the arguments of both Cleon and Diodotus in the famous Athenian debate over which policy toward the defeated rebel city of Mytilene will secure Athens from rebellion by other cities (3.37–48). Moreover, Thucydides believes that this harshly competitive situation among states has existed ever since the origins of politically organized separate communities.⁵⁹

Second, Thucydides indicates that because of the conditions imposed by the militarized interpolis anarchy, fear dominates the decision making of most states. This phenomenon, too, existed from earliest times (1.2.2: a general statement). Thus the Mycenaeans invited the House of Atreus into Mycenae because of fears of aggressive neighbors (*φόβω*, 1.9.2); the Greek polities followed Agamemnon to Troy not from friendship but out of fear (*φόβω*, 1.9.3). A frequent situation in Thucydides finds a city-state allegedly fearing that a shift in the balance of power will be to the immediate or eventual detriment of its security, and so it takes action.⁶⁰ The most famous example of this is Thucydides' exposition of "the truest explanation" for the coming of the Peloponnesian War itself (*τὴν ἀληθεστάτην πρόφασιν*, 1.23.6). There were many frictions and quarrels between Athens and Sparta in the middle and late 430s; Thucydides describes them in detail; and especially important was the growing Athenian pressure upon various allies of Sparta. But the Athenian pressure on Sparta's allies was, in turn, one of the consequences of a larger development, a general shift in geopolitical power in the Greek world toward Athens—and hence: "The most genuine explanation [for the war], though the least apparent in public discourse, I consider to have been that the Athenians, as their power grew great, struck fear [*φόβον*] into the Lacedaemonians, and compelled them into war." Thucydides repeats his point about Spartan fear with great emphasis in 1.88 (*φοβούμενοι*).⁶¹

59. See 1.2 *passim*, 1.5 *passim*, 1.8.3 (early Greece), 6.2–5 (early Sicily); cf. Crane 1998: 16. Thucydides' contention is borne out by archaeology: see Keeley 1999. Hence agricultural settlements in Neolithic Britain (ca. 4000 B.C.) are all surrounded by defensive fortifications—which still did not always prevent their inhabitants from being massacred (18).

60. Cf. Kauppi 1991: 104 and n. 7.

61. On the relationship as Thucydides saw it between the individual "disputes and quarrels" of Thuc. 1.23.5 (= the Athenian pressure on Sparta's allies), and "the most gen-

Thucydides goes on to underline many contemporary cases where local power-balances among lesser states are shifting, with consequently developing fears on the weaker side. Thus the Corcyrean appeal for an alliance with Athens in 433, a crucial step in the quarrels between Athens and Sparta's ally Corinth that led to the Peloponnesian War, is attributed by Thucydides to the Corcyreans' fear of being attacked by Corinth with no one to help them (ἐφοβοῦντο, 1.31.2). Indeed, appeal by fearful polities to the protection of the strong had existed from time immemorial in Greek interstate history (1.3.2; 1.9.2). But sometimes even the strong were worried. Thus the Mantineans, though allies of Sparta, became allies with Argos in 421 because they feared Sparta would not permit the existence of the new balance of power that Mantinea had established by successful war in Arcadia in the 420s (5.29.1). And Thucydides says that the main reason the Athenians agreed to the alliance with Corcyra was also out of fear—fear that the resources of Corcyra would otherwise fall into the hands of the Peloponnesians (1.44.2). Many Greek city-states sided with Sparta at the beginning of the war out of fear (δέος)—fear of being subordinated to Athenian power (1.77.6; cf. φοβούμενοι at 2.8.5); yet the primary reason why the Athenians themselves strove to increase their power was out of fear (μάλιστα μὲν ὑπὸ δέους, 1.75.3, cf. 76.2, strongly reiterated by the Athenian Euphemus at 6.82–87).

Thucydides in fact posits as a general rule that under anarchic conditions everyone, fearing the consequences of an unstable situation, acts defensively to protect their own interests (3.82.2–3)—yet such defensive actions often take the aggressive form of attempts to increase one's power and control over others (3.83.3–4).⁶² This is what modern Realist theorists have suggested is a crucial dynamic in interstate relations.⁶³ Numerous other Thucydidean examples of the power of fear could be cited.⁶⁴ It is particularly instructive that fear as the chief motivation behind crucial state actions—fear for one's power, for one's independence, even for one's physical survival—is not merely an important recurrent theme in

uine cause" of the war at 1.23.6 (the shift in power in favor of Athens), see now Eckstein 2003.

62. The passage is from Thucydides' famous discussion of internal *stasis* on Corcyra, but Connor (1991: 60–65) points out that Thucydides evidently thought of war among the Greek states as a kind of *stasis*.

63. See above, chap. 2, text at n. 31 (esp. Niebuhr on the impossibility of drawing a fine line between will to live and will to power).

64. See Kauppi 1991: 104–5; cf. Boucher 1998: 72–74, and now Crane 1998: 99. Earlier: de Romilly 1956: 119–27.

Thucydides' work, but actually a far more frequent theme than the greedy desire for imperialist expansion.⁶⁵

Moreover, Thucydides often depicts statesmen and populations as consciously worried that if a polity becomes militarily weak, or even appears to be weak, this will invite aggression from others. Pericles fears this in his speech to the Athenian Assembly before the Peloponnesian War (1.140.5 and 143.5); the Athenians as a group fear this at 3.16.1; Spartan and Argive statesmen, at war with each other, both fear this at 5.41.2; Nicias fears it in his speech to the Athenians before the Sicilian Expedition (6.10.2, 10.4, and 11.4); the Syracusans fear it when they appear to be losing to Athens (6.75.3); the Athenians fear it after the Sicilian Expedition's defeat (8.1.2). And the fear is justified: the Spartans are despised by many of their allies for allegedly showing weakness in making a compromise peace with Athens in 421, and their allies begin to desert (5.28.2); after defeat in Sicily weakens Athens, states that had been neutral now prepare to attack (8.2.1). Hence Themistocles' haste to rebuild the ruined walls of Athens after the Persians' defeat in 479—a necessity, he is alleged to have said, because only if the Athenians possessed military strength could they hope to be viewed as equals in the councils of their putative allies among the Greeks (1.91.6). This is the harsh and pitiless landscape of Greek interstate politics.⁶⁶

Thucydides is clearly a writer with his own agenda. But he is also a very intelligent eyewitness, and his perception of state motivation is confirmed by the views of other historical writers: in Herodotus even the Persian Great King, the most powerful of rulers, fears that appearing weak will invite disaster in the form of outside attack (7.11). So we must take fear and the sense of vulnerability (as opposed to sheer imperialist greed) seriously as a dominant motive behind the actions of Classical Greek states. This conforms to what Realist theory predicts is a major result of the pressures created in systems of militarized interstate anarchy: fear, "the rational apprehension of future evil . . . is the prime motive of international politics" (and stronger than greed).⁶⁷ Historians can sometimes argue persuasively that some states' fears seem in retrospect to have been unjustified—but that is irrelevant. The point is that under the pressures of a competitive and violence-prone international environment, where the capabilities and intentions of states are opaque to

65. See Kauppi 1991: 104.

66. See also Thuc. 4.1.3; 4.25.10.

67. Wight 1978: 138–39; cf. Mearsheimer 1995: 11.

one another, states cannot know for certain whether their fears are unjustified, and certainly cannot afford to act as if they are. That those fears may appear later to have been unwarranted is only ironic and tragic.⁶⁸

Stephen van Evera stresses that despite widespread fear, and the decline in power of some states, few modern states have ever been wiped off the map.⁶⁹ Yet the vulnerability of even large and sophisticated modern states is demonstrated by the recent demise of both the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia (in the latter case, destruction being accompanied by massive bloodshed).⁷⁰ And Thucydides' world was far more dangerous than ours. Existing within a similar anarchic and militarized structure, city-states (even Athens, the largest) were much smaller and more fragile than modern states, and Frank Adcock and D. J. Mosley are clearly wrong to say that the destruction of states was not usual in the wars of the poleis.⁷¹ On the contrary: their physical destruction was not infrequent. In the Classical period we know of more than forty such cases—a stunning number. The grim information here comes from a wide range of sources: Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Diodorus, and Pausanias. How total was the destruction referred to so often in our sources is unclear; ancient technology made total destruction difficult. Certainly populations were totally displaced, and large parts of cities were looted and burned. As Thucydides' Athenians say to the Melians, interstate politics is not a game engaged in for the sake of honor but a matter of physical survival (5.101).⁷²

The consequences of misjudgment and defeat were, of course, not always fatal. Classical Greek poleis rarely seized large areas of territory from defeated enemies; the point of victory was to establish general political domination. The Athenians were an exception, sometimes giving confiscated foreign land to their own citizens as private property, and so

68. See van Evera 1998: 41.

69. Ibid. 42–43; cf. Waltz 1979: 95.

70. In modern Africa, we have the recent cases of terrible problems in Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and to some extent Zaire.

71. Adcock and Mosley 1975: 196.

72. Examples: the destruction of Priene (Hdt. 1.161), Phocaea (1.163–65), Teos (1.168), Abdera (ibid.), Miletus (6.18–20), many Ionian cities as well as Chios, Lesbos, Tenedos, Chalcidon, and Byzantium (6.31–33); Eretria (6.100–102), Eion (Thuc. 1.98.1), Scyros (1.98.2), Mycenae (Diod. 11.65.5), Chaeronea (Thuc. 1.113.1), Hestiaeia (1.114.3), Aegina (2.27), Solium (2.30.1), Amphilocheian Argos (2.68.7), Colophon (3.34.1–2), Mytilene (3.50), Plataea (3.68), Potidaea (3.70), Anactorium (4.49), Thyrea (4.57.3), Torone (5.3.4), Leontini (5.4.2), Scione (5.32), Megara Hyblaea (6.4.2), Zancle, first settlement (6.4.5), Zancle, second settlement (ibid.), Camarina, first settlement (6.5.3), Camarina, second settlement (ibid.), Orneae (6.7.2), Hyccara (6.62.3), Mycalessus (7.29–30), Iasus (Diod. 13.104.9), Cedreae (Xen. *Hell.* 2.15); Lampsacus (*Hell.* 2.18), Plataea again (Paus. 9.1.8), Orchomenus (Diod. 15.79.5–6), Potidaea again (Diod. 16.8.3–5), and of course Melos (Thuc. 5.116).

were the Spartans, who famously seized Messenia and its population for their own economic use.⁷³ On the other hand, the destruction of city fortifications was a common demand upon the defeated—and the lack of city walls was meant to entail sharp restraint on independence.⁷⁴

Thus it must be stressed that in the ancient world external threats of the gravest sort were real, and occurred often. This is why Thucydides characterized interstate politics as “a hard school of danger” (1.18.3). Indeed, the term “danger” (*κίνδυνος*) occurs more than two hundred times in his work, appearing dozens of times as the deepest concern of state decision making. Danger is far more common than opportunity in Thucydides’ world—just as fear is more common in his work than the other motives that might lead a state to seek to expand its power.

The third crucial element for us in Thucydides is that he sought to explain the political workings of the Greek system of city-states *as* a system—a system that constrained its units (the city-states) from acting in certain ways, and pushed those units toward acting in other and destructive ways. The most important passage in this regard is 1.23.6, already referred to above. Here Thucydides places primary responsibility for the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War neither upon the Spartans nor upon the Athenians, but rather upon impersonal forces and processes within the system: for it was the growth of the power of one state that compelled another state, facing the prospect of decline, to go to war (*ἀναγκάσαι ἐς τὸ πολεμεῖν*).⁷⁵ Thucydides’ “truest explanation” (1.23.6) is thus a classic description of what modern students of international relations call the theory of “power-transition crisis,” in which a major state that perceives itself to be losing power, or a rising state bent on asserting its new power, initiates war on a systemwide scale.⁷⁶

73. On the Athenian cleruchies of the fifth century, and their impact, see Cawkwell 1997: 102–3.

74. Demands for the destruction of city walls: Potidaea (Thuc. 1.56.2); Thasos (Thuc. 1.101.3); Samos (1.117.3); Athens (Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.20 and 23); Elis (*Hell.* 3.2.30–31); Mantinea (*Hell.* 5.1.1–7); Chios and many Ionian cities, evidently by order of Athens: discussion and evidence in Meiggs 1972: 149–50. On the importance of city walls as the basis of city-state independence and power: Ober 2001: 277–78.

75. It is the Athenians’ “growing great” (*μεγάλους γιγνομένους*)—the impersonal process—that compels the Spartans toward war (1.23.6). But note that for Thucydides, the impact of the impersonal process of power transition also came to be expressed in specific voluntary decisions taken by the Athenians—to pressure Sparta’s allies—that the Spartans could not stand (1.118.2; cf. 1.23.5 and 1.88). See now Eckstein 2003.

76. Hence Copeland (2000: 116–17) invokes Thuc. 1.23.6 to explain the outbreak of World War I, with Wilhelmine Germany (in the role of Sparta) initiating while it still could a preventive war against the rising challenger Russia (in the role of Athens).

But Thucydides did not believe in monocausal or even simple multi-causal explanations for major events. He presents his audience with other causes of the war—subsidiary causes—at both the unit level (the differing sociocultural characteristics of Athens and Sparta) and even at the level of individuals (the impact upon decision making of particular statesmen: Pericles at Athens and Sthenelaidas at Sparta). One may thus call his approach to causation “layered.” Nevertheless, Thucydides’ “most genuine explanation” of why the Peloponnesian War took place (1.23.6: ἡ ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις) is at the system level. That explanation, standing simply on its own, thus links one of our most sensitive observers of ancient interstate politics directly to the paradigms of contemporary Realism.⁷⁷

But that explanation, at 1.23.6, does not stand alone. The idea that the interstate system pushes its subunits—the states—to act in specific and destructive ways occurs repeatedly in Thucydides’ history. The thesis that the Spartans in 432–431 acted under the compulsion of the shifting of power within the Greek state system is reasserted in more detail at 1.118.2 (note the force of ἀναγκάζονται and ἐπιχειρητέα in that passage), as well as at 1.88 (note πολεμητέα).⁷⁸ And Sparta is not alone. Thucydides has Pericles declare much the same thing to the Athenian Assembly about the pressures on Athens toward war caused by the interstate situation as it had developed by winter 432/431 (ἀνάγκη πολεμεῖν, 1.144.3). Later, Thucydides has Pericles say that if a polity has a choice, it is insanity (ἄνοια) to choose war over peace (2.61.1); but under the circumstances the Athenians had no choice (ibid.: ἀναγκαῖον). Such remarks can easily be seen as self-serving. Yet Martin Ostwald has pointed out how often Thucydides stresses the situational ἀνάγκαι under which human decision makers and states labor.⁷⁹ Hence the Plataeans claim that they fought from necessity in 431 (κατ’ ἀνάγκην: 3.58.2), while the Thebans claim they sided with the Persians in 480 under compulsion (3.64.3 and 5); and in both cases the claims have justification. Circumstances

77. The primacy of Thucydidean system-level explanation of interstate politics, as shown by the “truest explanation,” which yet is placed among other true explanations: Aron 1973: 11–16; Gilpin 1988: 595–97; Doyle 1991: 174–77; Lebow 1991: 135–38; Copeland 2000: 210–11. Classicists agree that the use of the superlative at 1.23.6 (ἀληθεστάτη) privileges the systemic shift in power in favor of Athens but indicates that in Thucydides’ mind there were other true explanations besides: see Heubeck 1980: esp. 232–35; Heath 1986: 104–5; Richardson 1990: 155–61; Eckstein 2003.

78. Doyle 1991: 175–77; cf. Eckstein 2003: 759–61. On the strong implications of words such as ἀνάγκη in Thucydides, see Ostwald 1988: 1–7.

79. Ibid. 15 and 18.

(the balance of power) later compelled the Spartans to accept a peace with Athens that they did not wish (*κατ' ἀνάγκην*, 6.10.2).⁸⁰

Hence, too, it was the dangerous placement of Corcyra within the interstate system, Thucydides says, that compelled the unwilling Corcyreans to approach Athens in 433 for the sake of their own safety (1.28.3, *ἀναγκασθήσεσθαι*; cf. 1.23.6, *ἀναγκάσαι*). The pattern by which a less powerful state under local external threat feels compelled to appeal to a more powerful state for help is one that we will see repeatedly in this study, especially with regard to Rome (but not only Rome) in the western Mediterranean; but the paradigm in ancient interstate relations is apparent to Thucydides much earlier, and its dangers underlined. Similarly, it was primarily the pressures of the competitive interstate system that pushed the reluctant Athenians into accepting the Corcyrean alliance—thus helping precipitate crisis first with Corinth and later with Sparta, eventually leading to hegemonic war. Thucydides says that the Athenians acted from several motives, but primarily they feared that failure to help Corcyra would result in the large Corcyrean military resources ending up in the hands of competitors and enemies (1.44.3). That was not a risk they were prepared to take; acting provocatively against Corinth was, on the other hand, a risk they were prepared to take.⁸¹

There is an even deeper level of causation at work here. Thucydides has the Athenian spokesmen at Sparta declare that the Athenians' perilous situation after the Persian War—with Athens burnt to the ground—was what compelled the Athenians to increase their power in the first place, primarily for the sake of their own self-preservation (*κατηνακάσθημεν*, 1.75.3). They add that the Spartans in a similar situation would have been compelled to act similarly (*ἀναγκασθέντας*, 76.1); soon the Spartan king Archidamus admits that all states act from similar motives (1.84.3). The Athenian spokesmen add other motives to Athens' imperial career besides fear: interest in material gain, and desire for the glory of power (1.75.3); but their declaration that state expansion was caused primarily by fear generated by pressing circumstances was clearly not expected to be greeted with derision. We should note that the ancient scholiast on 1.75.3 takes this statement about fear very seriously.⁸² Thus in Thucy-

80. Plataea in 431: Thuc. 2.2–6; Thebes in 480: see the emphasis on Theban fear (*φόβον*) at Polyb. 4.3.6. See esp. Ostwald 1988: 29–30.

81. On the Corcyra crisis of 433: Stadter 1983: 131–36; Crane 1998: chap. 4.

82. See Gomme 1945: 235. Thuc. 1.75–76 is, then, a classic example of the tragic vision of Realism.

did the growth of Athenian power and empire, which in 1.23.6 he declares was primarily what compelled the Spartans to go to war, is itself “the result of necessity embedded in motivations common to all men.”⁸³

Pericles, Cleon, and Euphemus later all portray the creation and continuation of Athens as a “tyrant state” not primarily as glorious but as primarily a political and military necessity whose consequences must be accepted. Euphemus tells the Sicilians that the Athenians rule cities “so that we ourselves are not subject to another” (6.87.2).⁸⁴ Since Pericles and Cleon are depicted as speaking in those same tones to the Athenian Assembly itself, there is no need to take Euphemus’s statements as merely propaganda aimed at the Sicilians.⁸⁵

Indeed, by the later stages of the war Thucydides portrays all Greek governments as believing they are acting under the compulsion of the demands of difficult situations (in our terms: under systemic pressure). Hence Thucydides describes all the allies of both sides at the fighting at Syracuse as there only because of the pressure of various necessities (7.57.1).⁸⁶ Similarly, the Syracusan statesman Hermocrates invokes the balance-of-power system when he argues before the Syracusan public that the arrival of the Athenian invasion force in Sicily will force other Siceliote polities, terrified of becoming subjected to Athens, into seeking alliance with Syracuse (6.33.4). The fact is that Thucydides’ narrative repeatedly depicts statesmen who, while free to make crucial decisions, also believe that few if any alternatives are available to them.⁸⁷ Most striking is that in 432/431: Thucydides has both the Spartans (1.118.2) and the Athenians (1.144) believing that a war is being forced upon them, while similarly in discussing how the peace of 421 broke down and the war began again, Thucydides says that both the Spartans and the Athenians “were forced” (*ἀναγκασθέντες*) by the situation back into war (5.25.3). Moreover, Thucydides was hardly alone among Greek thinkers in his stress on grim necessity (as opposed to, e.g., a sense of justice) as a prime factor in interstate action.⁸⁸

83. Ostwald 1988: 45.

84. Pericles: Thuc. 2.63.1–2 (his last speech); Cleon: 3.37; Euphemus: 6.87.

85. These speeches do not offer a positive assessment of tyranny even from the ruler’s point of view: see Tuplin 1985: 361–62; Scanlon 1987: 288–89. On Thucydides’ belief that all states are compelled by their situation to act in often brutal self-interest see also Orwin 1994: chaps. I and II.

86. Cogan 1981: 163–64.

87. The frequency with which speakers in Thucydides indicate that states have no choice in their actions: Kauppi 1991: 114–16. This is the problem of “cognitive closure” (114), on which see above, chap. 2, text at n. 52.

88. See, e.g., Demosth. 2 *Phil.* 1 and 3.

STRUCTURE, CULTURE, AND DIPLOMACY

So far, Greek interstate relations as Thucydides depicts them fit the modern Realist model—while modern structural Realist paradigms offer a powerful tool for understanding in a theoretically explicit fashion Classical interstate behavior as Greek sources from Herodotus through Thucydides to Xenophon and Plato describe it. The present study will argue that what is true of the fifth century B.C. is equally true of the third. But different cultures really are different, and two important features distinguish the ancient Mediterranean from the modern interstate system—and again, both features are as characteristic of the third century as the fifth.

First, outbreaks of war within the Greek interstate system were facilitated by the primitive character of the processes of Greek diplomacy.

Liberal-institutionalist critics of Realism argue that Realists underestimate the impact of modern fast communications and sophisticated diplomatic institutions in the creation of interdependence and the amelioration of the tendency toward violence even in anarchic international systems.⁸⁹ But this is an inappropriate criticism of Realism as a model for helping understand the state-systems of Mediterranean antiquity. The prominent political scientist Richard Ned Lebow has expressed shock at the lack of channels of quick and regular communication among the Classical Greek states, and especially the lack of institutions for continuous interstate contact. Greek poleis sent out no permanent ambassadors or diplomatic missions to other polities; they had no permanent institutionalized relations with each other; there were no international institutions to facilitate negotiation and compromise between aggrieved states.⁹⁰ Moreover, the Classical poleis failed to develop either a specialized corps of experienced diplomats, or (equally important) a specialized diplomatic language employed to soften realities: instead, Greek diplomatic interactions tended to parallel the blunt tones of bitter private altercations.⁹¹ In sum, the Greek polities—indeed, all ancient Mediterranean polities—existed in an interstate condition one might almost call prediplomatic.⁹²

89. See above, chap. 2, text at n. 67.

90. Lebow 1991: 144–45. Kauppi (1991: 119) is similarly shocked at the situation. The lack of permanent diplomatic missions is already underlined by Grant 1965: 262. It is admitted even by Bederman 2001: 105–6. The same situation in fifth-century- B.C. China of the Warring States: Zhang 2001: 48.

91. Grant 1965: 262–63.

92. See Aron 1973: 15.

Such a primitive level of interstate contact had a dangerous impact.⁹³ The limited ability of ancient states to communicate and cooperate with each other affected those states' very definition of what their interests were, and the perceived choices of strategies available to achieve those interests.⁹⁴ It meant that the Realist "uncertainty principle"—states' lack of information about the capabilities and intentions of other states—tended in antiquity to work with extraordinary intensity.⁹⁵ The lack of permanent missions abroad also meant that no significant official institutions existed to give early warning to the home government about troubling developments in a foreign state, and conversely no official way to transmit at an early point (quietly or privately) a home government's concerns upon learning of such developments, in the hope of modifying the situation before it became a crisis.⁹⁶ And this pronounced tendency toward myopia toward the outside world was part and parcel everywhere of the Greek ideal of polis autarchy, including in the economic and military realms.⁹⁷

The Greek city-states thus provide a powerful example of the Realist thesis that the tendency toward similarity of units within an interstate anarchy fosters very low levels of interdependence among states. Indeed, very low levels of interdependence prevailed throughout the entire period covered in this monograph. Yet interdependence is considered by Neo-liberal international-relations theorists to be fundamental to ameliorating the pessimistic predictions of Realism concerning the impact of the interstate anarchy.⁹⁸

One important consequence of this tendency among Greek states toward diplomatic myopia and autarchy is that the situations that did require the dispatch of official envoys abroad were most often those in which strains in relations with other states had already reached a dan-

93. Despite Kokaz 2001: 95—who is optimistic about the effect of occasional “travelling ambassadors,” and private foreign “friends” resident in a city (on both of which, see below).

94. On differing regimes of diplomatic process and their impact on the perceived choices available to states: Keohane and Nye 1987: esp. 745–49.

95. The “uncertainty principle”: above, chap. 2, text at n. 23.

96. Despite Mosley (1973: 93) and Kokaz (2001: 95), the presence of private “friends” of a foreign state within a city-state (these were called *proxenoi*) did not compensate for the lack of permanent official ambassadors: the access of *proxenoi* to information and their political influence were highly limited. On the perils of depending on *proxenoi* for information, see Lewis 1996: 78–80. Example: Arist. *Pol.* 1304a3 (Mytilene).

97. “Myopia” and its destructive effect on interstate relations: Glaser 1992: 515. The Greek ideal of state autarchy: Purnell 1978: 26–27.

98. See above, chap. 2, text at n. 67.

gerous level. Yet it was precisely when relations with another polis were strained, when there was a sharp clash of interests, that stern considerations of interstate status and prestige made compromise difficult.⁹⁹ These considerations meant that no Classical Greek government ever seriously considered sacrificing important interests merely to preserve the general peace. A state might, of course, sacrifice important interests when confronted by greatly superior power—but the issue then was not peace but self-preservation. In that sense crisis diplomacy among clashing city-states was not so much a traditional alternative to war as an alternative means of pursuing the agenda of the more powerful state—a less directly violent means of interstate coercion. But coercion it was: what modern political scientists call “compellence diplomacy.”¹⁰⁰

There is another negative aspect to this phenomenon: compellence diplomacy is rarely, nor can it afford to be, a bluff—that is, not backed by a willingness to use violence to enforce its demands.¹⁰¹ And this is clearly the case with the Greek version of compellence: states did not just seem tough; they were tough, and they were ready to fight. Hence crisis diplomacy in Classical Greece—if we may call such attempts at coercion “diplomacy”—was, like war itself, often merely another facet of an interstate system based on the brutal facts of power, and the prevalence of almost unrestrained competition and clashes of interest.¹⁰²

Further, especially when Greek states were comparable in power, as opposed to when a disparity in power framed the dyadic interaction, the problem of compromise was greatly exacerbated by the fact that Greek crisis diplomacy was not merely coercive, but publicly coercive.¹⁰³ When official envoys were finally sent out to deal with a crisis now inflamed, they usually made their demands for redress of alleged grievances in public, in front of the other side’s council or even its people’s assembly. Such demands, once so forcefully and publicly made, were not easily moderated, thereby easing the crisis. Indeed, it was rare for envoys in a crisis to have power to modify state demands.¹⁰⁴ Yet such demands also could

99. See Lebow 1991: 144; Kauppi 1991: 119.

100. On this type of diplomacy and its detrimental impact in a modern context, see esp. Ferrar 1981: 194–200—who also believes such diplomacy is typical of states existing in an anarchic international system, for all the Realist reasons.

101. Ibid. 194–95, with the example of the July Crisis of 1914. So, too, Stevenson (1997a: esp. 134–35), stressing the negative impact both of structural anarchy and the habit of coercive diplomacy.

102. See Strauss 1991: 203.

103. Stressed by Lebow 1991: 144–45; cf. already Grant 1965: 262.

104. See Missiou-Ladi 1987: esp. 339–40; cf. Mosley 1973: 30–31 and 35–36.

not be easily acceded to by the other side—precisely because, being both coercive and public, they had initiated what modern political scientists term a “contest of resolve” between polities—a contest of resolve, again, played out in public.¹⁰⁵

Political scientists posit that such threats and/or displays of power, even if momentarily successful, are themselves in general destabilizing to peace—creating enduring resentments.¹⁰⁶ But the Greek interstate realm was so intensely competitive that overt threats, demands, and contests of resolve were even more destabilizing than usual. A strong commitment to independence, to autarchic freedom of decision and action, and the public assertion of one’s rights and hence one’s high status were central cultural values throughout the ancient Mediterranean, and very intense in Greece. Demands backed by threats might be seen by one Greek side as an assertion of its honor and worth within the interstate arena, the right to public respect (in Greek, *τιμή*); but they were easily seen by the other Greek side as damaging to its own honor, worth, and right to public respect within the interstate arena. The demands and threats arising from compellence diplomacy could even be seen as aimed themselves at creating outright dominance via the imposition of humiliation—and states might therefore prefer to risk war rather than risk losing status by giving in. Political compromise for the Greeks was in any case often culturally difficult, because it could be seen as evidence of cowardice (or “slavelike” mentality); this was a world where Greek elites in public discourse traditionally ranked their cities against each other in *τιμή* as if they were Homeric heroes.¹⁰⁷

In such an atmosphere the habit of making haughty public demands on the other side—compellence diplomacy—was likely to find rejection. A good example is the lengthy peace negotiations between Sparta and Athens in the winter of 432/431 B.C., before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. These diplomatic interactions were unusual in Greek practice, in that several separate embassies were sent by the Spartans to

105. These emissaries arriving in a crisis to make stern demands in public are, unfortunately, the ameliorative “travelling diplomats” of Kokaz 2001: 95. International crises as “contests of resolve” even in the modern world: Questor 1988: 704–6; Mercer 1993: esp. 166–67. Greek examples: the Corcyrean demands at Epidamnus: Thuc. 1.26.3; the Corinthian demands at Athens regarding Corcyra (1.40.3); Brasidas’s threat to Acanthus (4.87).

106. See Jervis et al. 1985.

107. Emphasized by Crane 1998: 66; cf. Lendon 2000: esp. 21–22. This is the cultural atmosphere that leads Pericles to praise those men who “would rather perish in resistance than find life through submission” (2.42.2).

try to resolve the crisis, rather than only one embassy; but every varying Spartan public demand for an Athenian concession during the protracted discussions was matched by an Athenian public demand along the same lines of discussion as the Spartans brought up. It was a classic contest of resolve in public, and of course in the end it did not avoid war.¹⁰⁸

It is true that to some extent the Greek view that public demands were almost a public insult (*ἔβρις*), requiring if not vengeance then at least unyielding opposition, was in part a cultural preference—not merely a response to the constraints of a multipolar system. As Aristotle said, anger was the usual response to behavior aimed at undermining one's status by means of assertion of unwarranted dominance (*Rhet.* 1378b23–35). Pericles answered the Spartan demand that the Athenians make a unilateral concession in order to avoid war (the revoking of the Megara Decree) by urging the Athenian Assembly not to yield (Thuc. 1.140.1)—for the yielding itself would be a repugnant act. He proclaimed that the Spartans must learn to treat the Athenians as equals (*ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου*, 1.140.5).¹⁰⁹

The contention of modern international-relations Constructivists that a more communitarian discourse might alleviate the conflictual nature of interstate relations (see above, chapter 2), while theoretically interesting, thus has no relevance to Classical Greece. Such a discourse did not develop under Greek cultural conditions, and never could have. On the other hand, it would be fair to say with the Constructivists that in the prevalence of Greek compellence diplomacy we are dealing not merely with the absence of better ways of handling crises diplomatically, but with something worse: a cultural habit of diplomatic discourse that itself had an active and baleful influence in increasing the frequency of wars. That is: the prevalence of a discourse of compellence, honor, and threat among the Greek poleis appears to have been in itself an important factor creating a conflict-prone environment—and to that extent this conforms to the Constructivist paradigm.

Yet the harsh diplomatic interactions of the Greeks were also not merely the self-fulfilling prophecy of a particular discourse of violence. More was involved than a culturally determined desire to be recognized as greater than others, or greater than your current interlocutor, and a culturally determined desire to intimidate rather than be dominated—though these mo-

108. See the analysis of Wick 1977: 76–89.

109. The perceived threat to state status and interest posed by the hybriistic acts of others: cf. also Thuc. 1.82.2, 4.18.2, 3.45.4.

tives were crucial. And more was involved than the pervasive cultural influence of the ideal of Homeric heroism—though this too has great importance.¹¹⁰ Rather—and here the Realist paradigm reappears in great force—in the absence of international law or the means to enforce it, a reputation for toughness and ferocity in protecting and asserting one's interests in the face of others' aggressive conduct serves, in general, a deeply pragmatic purpose. To gain and possess such a reputation is politically and strategically precious, for it helps ensure actual security, because such a reputation helps ensure that people will think twice before interfering with your interests. In other words: the stress on the need of city-states to gain and possess high status and *τιμή* did not arise merely because the decision-making elites read the *Iliad*. Rather, it was another grim and practical consequence of the anarchic interstate system itself, the brutal power politics that actually existed among Greek states.¹¹¹

This is because in an anarchy, preserving one's reputation for power in the face of challenge is crucial for preserving one's actual power, and an action taken against one's honor and reputation is an action causing real material injury. As Hobbes said, "the reputation for power *is* power," and the same is true of a reputation for hesitation and weakness.¹¹² Avner Offner, working on the destructive role played by considerations of state honor in the flawed diplomacy that led to World War I,¹¹³ has pointed out the relevance of Elijah Anderson's brilliant examination of life in the violent Philadelphia inner city to the study of interstate relations under an anarchy. Anderson, in *Code of the Street*, explains why, in a place where law enforcement is mostly not present or is ineffective and people are therefore on their own, the harsh environment requires a constant campaigning for respect from others, a campaign based on a publicly asserted willingness to do violence:

As a means of survival, one learns the value of having a "name," a reputation for being willing and able to fight, even for being quick-tempered. . . . Respect becomes critical for staying out of harm's way. . . . The surrounding environmental influences are key, a world that provides a strong rationale for physically campaigning for respect. . . . Constant

110. Putting overwhelming blame here on the influence of Homer: Havelock 1972: 35–36, cf. 42 and 44; cf. also Lendon 2000: esp. 21–22.

111. See Wight 1978: 91–92. The importance of cultural preferences for certain types of interstate action, but within systemic constraints: Morrow 1988: 75–99.

112. Hobbes 1959: 143.

113. Offner 1995: 213–41; on the destructive interstate role of honor, see already Joll 1972: 307–28.

vigilance is required against even giving the impression that transgressions will be tolerated. Appearing capable of taking care of oneself is a form of self-defense. . . . Part of what protects a person is what his status on the street is.¹¹⁴

Because of the severe environmental pressures, if an interpersonal conflict does arise, “it may be very difficult for either party to back down, particularly if an audience is present.”¹¹⁵

“Particularly if an audience is present”: leaders in the poleis of Classical Greece (and later in the Hellenistic Mediterranean, both in the Greek East and at Rome and Carthage) would have well understood Anderson’s analysis; for even more than the honor-bound states and statesmen of Europe in 1914, the politics of the ancient Mediterranean existed within a harshly competitive interstate system essentially unregulated by law—which is why their leaders believed that a reputation for weakness was dangerous.¹¹⁶ It is why Pericles urges that his Athenians never yield diplomatically to the Spartans: his fear is that if the Athenians show they can be intimidated on the Megara issue, greater and more damaging demands will come (Thuc. 1.141.1 and 5). As an Athenian leader later says, “those who do not yield to equals . . . succeed the best” (5.111.4). The Athenians claimed they seized Melos in order to preserve their reputation for power among their own allies, and thus make their hold upon them more secure (5.95 and 97). This is also an important reason why the Spartans are pushed by their own allies into war against Athens in 432: in order to maintain external respect and reputation, and hence to maintain their actually existing hegemonic position (cf. esp. Thuc. 1.74.4–7).¹¹⁷ Similarly, the original conflict between Corinth and its colony Corcyra in the 430s, which led the Greek spiral into general war, was caused in part by Corcyrean actions that publicly dishonored Corinth (Thuc. 1.25.4). Such publicly insulting actions merely struck symbolically at Corinthian prestige and status; but it was such prestige and status that helped Corinth to assemble ten other city-states to aid it against

114. Anderson 1999: 66–67 and 72–73; cf. Offner 1995: 224 (employing earlier work by Anderson).

115. Anderson 1999: 79. Cf. Eckstein 2000: 877–78.

116. How issues of honor made interstate cooperation difficult among the Greeks: see also Raaflaub 1985; Strauss 1986: 31–36; Strauss 1991: 202–3.

117. See Crane 1998: 17–18: Sparta’s hegemonic position “depends first and foremost upon the respect . . . of its many allies”; cf. 100: Sparta’s current reputation determines how many poleis send how many soldiers to support Spartan projects.

Corcyra (1.27.2) and helped Corinth maintain its hegemony and influence over its other colonies (cf. 1.38.2–3).¹¹⁸ In sum, as we take Greek cultural obsessions about status and honor into serious account in discussion of interstate politics in Classical Greece, we can and should simultaneously accept the impact of the pressures of the anarchic system itself in helping to create and perpetuate these cultural obsessions in interstate relations. As the British diplomat Sir Harold Nicholson succinctly said, prestige is “power based on reputation.” It was a complex synergy.¹¹⁹

Richard Ned Lebow is in fact not the first scholar to underline the primitive character of diplomacy in the ancient Mediterranean, or to point to this as a crucial factor contributing to the prevailing international disorder—and not just in the fifth century. The primitiveness of institutions of Greek interstate contact and of typical Greek interactions in a crisis, amid the touchy polis autarchy, are all further examples of how the ancient Mediterranean world closely conforms to Kenneth Waltz’s “state of nature.”¹²⁰

The second special aspect of Greek interstate conduct that needs underlining is the special intensity of Greek balancing behavior in the face of a rising local hegemon.

Thucydides himself founded the study of this phenomenon.¹²¹ Modern political scientists, working on the basis of the behavior of modern states, have shown that smaller states when confronted with the growing power of a potential hegemon have historically acted in one of two ways. Either such states have banded together, in the hope that their combined power would create a new equilibrium of power against the larger state (classic balancing), or—though this is somewhat less likely—individual states have joined forces with the threatening hegemon, hoping to survive, or even to gain geopolitical advantage (political scientists

118. Issues of status and honor—as well as material interests—at the heart of the quarrel between Corcyra and Corinth: see Crane 1998: chap. 4; cf. Kagan 1995: 38–39 and n. 22.

119. Nicholson 1937, quoted in Hyam 1999: 29. On the synergy, see Eckstein 2000: 877–79; cf. Crane 1998: 101–5. Note the title of chap. 2 in Anderson 1999: “Campaigning for Respect.” The pressures of the broader system upon the development of internal culture: see the scholarship in chap. 2 n. 82 above.

120. The primitiveness of ancient diplomacy: Kagan 1969: 353–54; Szidat 1970: 1–3; Eckstein 1987: xviii–xix.

121. See 1.28.3; 1.77.6; 2.8.5; 6.33.4; and 8.48 (explicit Persian policy, as advised by the Athenian Alcibiades). It is part of Thucydides’ approach of viewing the Greek world as a system. Alcibiades’ own aim, however, was ultimately not balance but Athenian victory: see Schmitt 1974: 77–79.

term this “bandwagoning”).¹²² Among the Greek poleis, however, while it is true that the Spartans worried that their allies might bandwagon with the Athenians unless they themselves acted on their allies’ behalf against Athenian pressure (cf. Thuc. 1.71.4–5), it was much more usual for weaker states to attempt balancing against a potential hegemon than it was for them to bandwagon with the growing power. Like Thucydides, the orator and statesman Demosthenes emphasized to his audience this instinctive Greek tendency toward balancing: see his classic discussion (3 *Phil.* 22–24) of Athenian policies in the fourth century, when Athenian power was far less than it had been earlier.¹²³

The Classical Greek phenomenon of intense balancing behavior seems also partly the result of the opportunities for such conduct provided to less powerful states by the nature of the Greek interstate system. Alternatives to jumping on the bandwagon of a growing power were usually available, provided by the presence in the system of other states both willing and able—because of the fairly widespread distribution of power across the system—to provide leadership against any threatening hegemon. Moreover, the probable availability of external balancers contributed to the spread in Greece of what modern theorists call “internal” balancing behavior—that is, widespread intense militarism, the ready and practiced mobilization of military resources within each state. Such mobilization of resources (in the Greek case, especially in the form of trained citizen militias of hoplite infantry) was facilitated in turn by the knowledge that external balancers would likely be available to aid a state in the face of a hegemonic threat.¹²⁴ Conversely, the relatively even distribution of power across the Greek system also made it difficult for a potential hegemon to collect such overwhelming geopolitical force that bandwagoning came to appear the only safe choice.¹²⁵ Indeed, the situation in Thucydides’ period, with its two great powers uneasily balanc-

122. The tendency of states toward balancing: Walt 1987; cf. Waltz 1988: 625; Sheehan 1996. The tendency of some states toward “bandwagoning”: Kaufman 1992: 417–47; Schweller 1994: 72–107. For a list of the inherent difficulties for weaker states in seeking balancing, see Wohlforth 1999 and 2002.

123. See Strauss 1991: esp. 202–3.

124. The political-science concept of “internal balancing” (i.e., internal militarism in the face of perceived external threats): Waltz 1979: 168. Importance of the presence of external balancers in this process: Strauss 1991: 198–201. Similar ideas are stressed now by Beck 1997: 231–32. Another way of putting this is that large interstate structures not only constrain but facilitate certain types of state action: see Giddens 1979.

125. On the concept of a “threshold point” in the growth of a hegemon’s power beyond which balancing becomes increasingly problematic as a policy for weaker states, see Wohlforth 2002: 103–6.

ing each other across the entire system—a situation approaching structural bipolarity—was unusual. Far more common historically was the structural situation of several relatively equally matched states: a situation of multipolarity.¹²⁶

Now, situations of bipolarity in an anarchic system generate serious problems for peace and stability—especially the threat of systemwide hegemonic war between the two polar powers, intentional or accidental; but modern studies suggest that a situation of multipolarity in an anarchic system is even more unstable and war-prone, because of constant wars of adjustment among its competing, fearful, and militarized states. It is precisely multipolarity and wars of adjustment within multipolarity that make up most of the geopolitical history of Classical Greece. But this means that the Greek city-states existed within a structurally very war-prone system.¹²⁷

Yet the intensity with which the Greek city-states practiced balancing behavior cannot be fully understood merely by pointing to the opportunities offered to them by their multipolar and war-prone system. Despite the Realist tendency to treat all historical actors as functionally alike, the specifics of Classical Greek culture are once more an important element in events. Yet, once more, the impact of Greek culture on events only intensifies the importance of Realist insights.

To gain understanding by going below the system level in order to engage with the cultures of the units that make up a system is not to deny explanatory power to structural pressures and opportunities; there is no reason why we cannot have both. This is a theme of the present study (as in our discussion of the Greek habit of coercive diplomacy: above), and I have already pointed out at the end of chapter 2 how this type of multilevel analysis will work in the case of Rome. Thucydides himself, as we have seen, offered such “layered” explanations. His portrayal, for instance, of overall Athenian energy as opposed to Spartan reluctance to engage with the outside world (1.68–71, cf. 1.20–21), a cultural and unit-level explanation, does not detract from the central system-causal insight he foregrounds at 1.23.6, but merely enriches it.¹²⁸ Even Kenneth Waltz, the sternest of structural Realists, leaves room for the impact of causes

126. See text above at n. 54.

127. Greek interstate relations as mostly a story of wars of adjustment within multipolarity: Strauss 1991: 198–201. For multipolarity as more war-prone (and perhaps much more war-prone) than bipolarity, see Geller and Singer 1998: 115–17.

128. On Thucydides’ national-character argument, see esp. Crane 1992: 225–56. Kauppi (1991: 103) and Johnson Bagby (1994: 131–53) argue that since Thucydides intro-

below the level of international structure.¹²⁹ Hence Stephen Walt can state that “Realists argue that systemic factors (e.g., relative power) exert a greater influence on state behavior than unit-level variables do, but no Realist maintains that unit-level factors exert no influence at all.” That is: Realists argue that the nature of the system within which states exist imposes strong constraints upon leaders and states, pushing them all in certain directions and discouraging them from taking action in other directions—but system-level factors do not determine human action. And there is room for other causal factors—what Realists call “nonstructural supplementary variables.”¹³⁰

This is why Barry Strauss, while suggesting that a system-level explanation—the opportunities offered to smaller states attempting to balance potential hegemonies by the multipolar distribution of power within the Greek state-system—was the most important explanation for the frequency and success of Greek balancing behavior, can simultaneously suggest that such behavior was also encouraged by cultural factors particular to Classical Greeks. Readers will now be familiar with these cultural factors. As Strauss says, in a world of highly militarized and slaveowning societies, the basic social polarity and “social metaphor” was between domination and being dominated; a strong sense of autonomy and pride and mastery, and the assertion of one’s rights and one’s status, were primary cultural values; envy and fear of the power of others were rife; cooperation and compromise might be viewed as cowardice. Hence bandwagoning with a hegemon was culturally more difficult for ancient Greek polities than it may be for modern governments (though not impossible).¹³¹

In other words, Greek poleis tended strongly to make what one might call culturally instinctive (and not necessarily conscious) use of the opportunities for strategic balancing that the multipolarity of the Greek interstate system offered in abundance—rather than run any risk of submitting, or even appearing to submit, to others. And conversely, to go to war

duces unit-level explanations and even the impact of individual statesmen into his analysis of the causes of the Peloponnesian War, he cannot be considered a true Realist. But see Doyle 1991: 172–83, and now Eckstein 2003: 766–71.

129. See above chap. 2, text at n. 59.

130. For the methodology, see, e.g., Doyle 1991: esp. 172–83; Schweller 1998: esp. chaps. 4 and 5. The quote: Walt 1992: 473 n. 1. “Nonstructural supplementary variables,” i.e., variables supplementary to the fundamental structural factors in international politics: Christensen 1993: 333.

131. Strauss 1991: 203.

rather than to submit to the public demands of others—this was a risk that Greek governments show a great willingness to take.

Yet, again, this phenomenon—so destructive to interstate life—was not caused merely by cultural pressures. It was also caused by the pressures of the interstate environment. Modern political scientists posit that in anarchic systems where security is scarce and a reputation for power and firmness contributes to real security, states habitually engage in such assertions of honor: it becomes more important than avoiding war, because states thereby gain a reputation for sternness, and hence gain real power and security within the system.¹³² But this means that balancing and even “brinkmanship” becomes a habitual way of interstate life. And, in turn, when “brinkmanship” becomes a way of life, this in itself contributes to the already anxiety-ridden and warlike atmosphere.¹³³

Here one can add a final pressure originating at the system level that helps account for the prevalence of war over cooperation among the Classical poleis. Robert Jervis has famously argued that anarchy and the security dilemma do not preclude cooperation among states rather than bitter rivalry for power and influence, but there are two crucial variables leading to the possibility of cooperation even under anarchy: the dominance of defensive military strategy and technique and the ability to distinguish easily between military forces that are primarily intended for offense and those that are primarily defensive. These factors have a beneficial impact on the interstate environment because when the composition and hence the function of states’ armed forces are clearly either offensive or defensive, then the uncertainty of states regarding others’ capabilities and intentions is lessened. Especially if armed forces are clearly defensive, indicating a state is primarily interested in its own security and not in aggression, a mood of cooperation with other security-minded states can be established.¹³⁴ Similarly, when defensive strategy and technique is dominant in warfare, states will for that reason also feel

132. On “instinctive” balancing behavior, see Schmitt 1974: 68–69. On the impact of systemic anarchy upon issues of honor among the politicians who brought on World War I, see Offner 1995: 213–41 (esp 223–24); Stevenson 1997b: 134–35, cf. 128; cf. Mercer 1993: esp. 166–67. On the relationship of honor to anarchy under modern conditions, see already Joll 1972: 427–66. Note the comment of Wyatt-Brown (1982: 4) that questions of honor are inseparable from the issue of hierarchy; in this case, what is at stake is the avoidance of acknowledgment of any sort of interstate hierarchy at all, for no government dared to acknowledge itself as being of lesser rank.

133. The growth of “brinkmanship” as a dangerous diplomatic habit: Stevenson 1997a: 125–61, esp. 158.

134. On the destructive impact of the uncertainty principle upon interstate relations, see above, chap. 2, text at n. 22.

less threatened and vulnerable, and the systemic environment, while still anarchic, will appear generally somewhat more benign—thus allowing the possible common interests of states to come to the fore.¹³⁵

But, according to Jervis, the reverse is also true: when the composition and function of states' armed forces appear equally capable of offense and defense, then the uncertainty of states regarding other states' conduct intensifies—and thus the possibility of cooperation decreases. And when the offensive is the dominant strategy and technique in warfare, states necessarily have heightened security concerns, for they can easily suffer material and status damage from attacks against which defense appears difficult. Under such conditions the international environment seems the opposite of benign, and states tend to take (and indeed must take) all threats seriously. This in turn makes cooperative interstate structures harder to establish and maintain: because of the sense of vulnerability shared by all states in such a system, they bargain harder with each other and make concessions more grudgingly, and have less faith in any agreements that are made. Such offensive-dominant systems tend toward the worst Hobbesian-Waltzian paradigms of state interaction.¹³⁶

The latter situation in fact describes the world of the Greek city-states. First, the composition of most city-states' armed forces—hoplite heavy infantry armies on land, triremes at sea—leant themselves as a matter of technique equally to offensive or defensive operations; their ambiguity of function could thus only increase uncertainty and distrust among the cities. Second, and worse, the fundamental strategy of every state was, indeed, offensive—predicated on the invasion and devastation of enemy territory, especially in the spring harvest time, to live off the land oneself and to deprive an enemy of food resources. The military writer Onasander establishes the basic principle:

After his army has been organized the general should delay neither in his own territory nor in the lands of an ally; for he would then be consuming his own crops and injuring his friends more than his enemies. Rather, let him lead his forces out into enemy territory as soon as possible. . . . He will then be provided with unlimited support from the domain of the enemy if it is fertile and prosperous; and even if it is not, he will at least not cause injury to friendly territory, while gaining advantage from injuring that of the enemy.¹³⁷

Strat. 6.13

135. Jervis 1978: esp. 186–206; cf. van Evera 1999: chap. 6. Also: Glaser 1992: 186–87.

136. Jervis 1978; cf. also van Evera 1998: 10–11.

137. Onasander is a late writer in our terms (mid-first century A.D.), but he is expressing strategic truisms.

Such invasions could be defended against only by the risky tactic of a set-piece hoplite battle.¹³⁸ The alternative to hoplite battle was to build extensive frontier fortifications, but the effectiveness of such fortifications depended in good part on the vagaries of geography, and they were inordinately expensive; most states could not afford them.¹³⁹ When Pericles proposed in 432 that the Athenians remain on the local defensive within the walls of Athens and not confront the Spartans when they destructively invaded the Attic countryside (Thuc. 1.141–44), this was viewed as a radical strategy. But Pericles simultaneously advocated raiding the Peloponnese by sea, thus inflicting injury upon Sparta's allies and pressuring them to leave the war, while the Athenians during the war also regularly launched invasions by land of Megara, Sparta's ally at the northern end of the strategic Isthmus of Corinth, doing severe agricultural damage. In short, even Pericles' "defensive strategy" for the Peloponnesian War—famous in good part because it seemed to depart from traditional Greek strategy—had a large admixture of offensive operations.¹⁴⁰

Thus if, as some Realist theoreticians argue, the clarity of the intended use of armed forces and the dominance of defensive strategy and technique are crucial system-level variables encouraging the creation of cooperation among states even under interstate anarchy, whereas the ambiguity of the intended use of armed forces and the dominance of offensive strategy and technique in an anarchy are crucial system-level variables favoring the creation of a savagely insecure interstate environment, then it is important that in Classical Greece the function of city-states' armed forces was highly ambiguous and that, simultaneously, offensive strategy and technique dominated warmaking. No wonder, then, that in the anarchic and militarized system of the Classical poleis the vulnera-

138. The extent of damage to agriculture caused by the traditional strategy of invasion has been the subject of modern debate: see Ober 1985, against Hanson 1983 (who denies that ancient armies could do much damage, and that it was the "insult" of invasion that led to hoplite battle). Note Foxhall 1993: 134–45, who argues that crops may have been difficult to burn and trees difficult to cut down, but it was not impossible, and crucial agricultural installations (such as wine and olive presses) were very vulnerable, and financially expensive to replace. For widespread destruction of olive and fruit trees, see Polyb. 23.15 and 24.2.3—from an eyewitness. Material as well as status factors thus help explain why states so feared invasion.

139. On the fortification system built by Athens in the fourth century along its north-west frontier: Ober 1985; note that in addition to expense, the system did not prevent major invasions of Attica—e.g., by Macedon.

140. On Pericles' naval offensive (which had a powerful impact in the Peloponnese), see Westlake 1945: 75–84; cf. Cawkwell 1975: esp. 65–70. The Athenian invasions of the Megarid during the war: Fornara 1975: 213–28.

bility of individual states was high, cooperation therefore difficult—and that this helped make war common.

DĒMOKRATIA, INTERSTATE STRUCTURE, AND EXPANSION

So harsh was the competitive nature of the polis system that one of the major nonstructural variables true for modern international politics does not hold for the Greek world. Michael Doyle has famously hypothesized that because of powerful internal cultural and political constraints, states with democratic constitutions do not go to war against each other. In proposing this hypothesis—now widely accepted—Doyle was working from two hundred years of modern evidence.¹⁴¹ But the ancient Greek experience does not conform to Doyle's modern rule. The people of democratic Athens felt no compunction about attacking Syracuse, though Syracuse was a political democracy, or attacking their neighbors the Megarians twice a year during the Peloponnesian War even though Megara down to 424 B.C. was a political democracy; and in the sense that all state decisions were made by free and open vote of all (male) citizens, both main antagonists in the Peloponnesian War itself—Sparta and Athens—were political democracies.¹⁴²

Indeed, prominent scholars of antiquity have sometimes placed the explanation for Athenian expansion precisely on alleged specially negative internal characteristics of Athenian democracy itself. They argue that the Athenian record of aggressive activity in Greece and the Aegean after about 500 is to be attributed especially to pathological factors rooted in the nature of Athenian democratic politics. To begin with, there were the rivalries among democratic leaders—to whom war offered opportunities to distinguish themselves before the demos and to outshine their political opponents. In addition, the aggressive state conduct engineered by the politicians was founded on and encouraged by a tendency among the Athenian populace as a whole to find in interstate assertiveness and empire both opportunities for private profit and a needed psychological

141. Doyle 1986: 1151–69. Wide influence: Snyder 1993: 16. There is strong empirical evidence for the absence of war between modern democratic states: Geller and Singer 1998: 85–89. This does not, however, mean that tensions between modern democratic states do not occur—they cannot escape the friction of international existence—but conflicts are resolved short of war (87).

142. Cf. Lebow and Strauss 1991: 15. It is not clear that Doyle's thesis completely holds even for the modern world: was Wilhelmine Germany really so different in political structure from the constitutional democracies of France and Britain in 1914? See Waltz 2000: 8–13.

support for self-esteem, this latter being of particular importance to the lower classes. "These factors largely explain the aggressive foreign policy of democratic Athens."¹⁴³

This is our first case in ancient studies of the "unit-attribute theory" of empire already noted as a major explanation of empire in chapter 2. It originates in early twentieth-century European intellectual opposition to European colonialism and expansion. Here large international outcomes are explained through various alleged pathological attributes of states (i.e., units); internal forces suffice to produce large external outcomes; and the international system, if thought about at all, is taken to be the outcome of those internal forces.¹⁴⁴ In sum, it is the assertion of the *Primat der Innenpolitik* (the causal primacy of internal sociopolitical structures) that is explicatory of the *Sonderweg*—the specially negative internal development of imperial powers.¹⁴⁵ Unit-attribute theory has, naturally, also been instinctively applied by historians to the case of the rise of Rome. But in the Roman case, expansion is explained by an internal structure sharply different from the theory as applied to Athens: by the pathological impact on state policy caused primarily by a militarized aristocracy rather than by the pathological impact on state policy caused by democracy. This immediately raises questions, and we will have much more to say about the weaknesses of unit-attribute theory when we discuss Rome in the Mediterranean system of states as it existed in the third century. But for now, the following facts may be noted in relation to the application of such theories to fifth-century Athens.

First, Corcyra, a state with central characteristics similar to those of Athens—a democracy with economic and military resources great enough to play a very assertive role in Greek interstate politics, including the second largest Greek war fleet—did not play such an assertive role throughout most of the fifth century. On the contrary: it sought to remain aloof from the fifth-century struggles among the poleis. The sharp differences between the policies of Corcyra and those of Athens should call into question any alleged determinative power linking *dēmokratia* and military strength with a specially intense desire for imperial expansion. Corcyra

143. Raaflaub 1991: 581–83 (the quote: 582), and Raaflaub 1994: 103–46; cf. Raaflaub 1989. Similarly: Galpin 1984: 104–15; Beicken 1985: 220–25; Meier 1990: 555–605; and now esp. Welwei: 1999.

144. Introduction to unit-attribute theory, and examples of its operation: above, chap. 2, text at n. 56.

145. *Primat der Innenpolitik*: see Zakaria 1992: 179–81. *Sonderweg*: the original reference is to development of a specially virulent German authoritarianism and expansionism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

and Athens provide an excellent example of a point made by Gideon Rose: “The chief problem with *Innenpolitik* theories is that pure unit-level explanations have difficulty accounting for why states with similar domestic systems often act differently in the foreign policy sphere.”¹⁴⁶

Second, Corinth—not a democracy but with an oligarchic government in the 430s—by contrast was seeking to play an assertive interstate role in this period, including using its newly built large war fleet (the third largest in Greece) to conquer Corcyra itself.¹⁴⁷ Thebes was technically a democracy in the 360s, when it strove for hegemony in Greece—but it was also dominated to an enormous extent by the personality of one man, Epaminondas. The political structure at Sparta was more conservative than at Athens (a moderate democracy with a much stronger guiding council and less power for the assembly), yet Sparta, too, sought to establish hegemony in the Greek state-system once conditions in the system after the Peloponnesian War seemed to offer it the opportunity.¹⁴⁸ And note that Kurt Raaflaub, the most prominent advocate of the “pathological democracy” thesis, when discussing Rome finds the causes of Roman expansion primarily within its aristocracy, not any democratic structure.¹⁴⁹ To quote Rose again: “[another] problem with *Innenpolitik* theories is that pure unit-level explanations have difficulty accounting for the way . . . dissimilar states in similar situations often act alike.” In fact, unit-attribute theory appears to provide a decisive explanation for the rise of a hegemonic state only as long as scholars focus attention on that one state alone—as long as one does not examine the character and conduct of the other (often very differently organized) states that exist within the anarchic international system.¹⁵⁰

Finally, the intense rivalries that existed among democratic politicians at Athens clearly could operate to restrain Athenian international assertiveness as much as to encourage it. This is apparent in 483 in the opposition to Themistocles’ proposal to use income from the Laurium sil-

146. Corcyrean aloofness from interstate politics: Thuc. 1.31.2 and 33.4–5; a democracy: see Kagan 1969: 208–9; its great war fleet: Thuc. 1.33.1. The quote: Rose 1998: 148.

147. The destabilizing effect of Corinth’s war fleet in the Greek system in the 430s: Legon 1973: 161–71.

148. The postwar Spartan empire in Greece: Andrewes 1978: 91–102; Cartledge 1987: esp. chaps. 6 and 17–19. The post-Spartan dominance of Thebes: Buckler 1980; cf. Buckler 1982: 79–89.

149. Raaflaub on Rome: see below, chap. 6. On pathological Athenian democracy: see above, n. 143.

150. The quote: Rose 1998: 148. Cf. Waltz 1979: 26, 65, and 67, and Waltz 1988: 617 and 619. In other words, unit-attribute theory works best with a historiography that is “introverted”—i.e., focused on one state’s history alone. cf. Bayly 1989: 13–14.

ver mines to build a large Athenian war fleet (opposition that was probably headed by the important politician Aristides “the Just”); again in the bitter conflict between Pericles and Thucydides the son of Melesias in the 440s over Pericles’ exploitative policy toward Athens’ subject allies; again in the Athenian decision in 433—obviously a compromise reached between Pericles and his political opponents—to send only a relatively few warships to help Corcyra against the Corinthian threat rather than to send the whole Athenian fleet (or, conversely, not to offer the Corcyreans any alliance at all); and again in the sharp debates in the assembly in 415 between Alcibiades and Nicias over whether Athens should attempt the conquest of Sicily.¹⁵¹

In fact, a state where a large multiplicity of conflicting personal and political interests was always being pursued, where differences over public policy could be severe, and where personal rivalries and sincere policy differences were played out in debates filled with high rhetoric and drama before mass assemblies whose decisions were uncertain beforehand—such a state is not the obvious candidate on grounds of internal political character to be an efficiently expanding hegemonic power. On the contrary: given the internal political structure of the Athenian state and its chaotic, shifting internal politics, the wonder is that the Athenians were able to construct a dominating position of power within the Greek state-system in the first place and then hold on to it for seventy years.¹⁵²

CONCLUSION

The Greek city-state world fulfills the most pessimistic paradigms posited by Realist international-relations theorists. Amid a large multitude of states, there was no international law, and the few restrictions on interstate behavior that existed by informal custom had no means of being enforced. Thus all poleis existed in a self-help regime: survival and security depended only upon each state’s own efforts; trust in others did

151. Aristides’ opposition to Themistocles’ naval plan (proposing instead to distribute the Laurium money to the citizenry): Plut. *Arist.* 7, cf. *Themist.* 4, with Badian 1993: 96. Further clashes over policy: Plut. *Arist.* 24, with Badian 1993: 131–32 and n. 29. The conflicts over policy in the 440s: Wade-Gery 1958: 239–70; Frost, 1964: 385–99. The conflict over the decision of 433: see Kagan, 1969: 237–45. The debates over policy in 415: Thuc. 6.8–26, with Forde 1989: chap. 2.

152. The somewhat inhibiting effect of divided decision-making structures on state decisions for war: see Geller and Singer 1998: 88. The point holds for Rome as well: see below, chap. 7. Research on the modern world suggests that democratically organized states are statistically neither more nor less likely than other types of internal regimes to engage in war (Geller and Singer 1998: 55).

not exist; and no help was forthcoming to ameliorate conflict from international institutions (for they either did not exist or were ineffective). The resulting situation possessed all the negative elements predicted by modern Realism: intense interstate competition for power and status; heavy and widespread militarization; widespread power-maximizing behavior; an atmosphere of fear, a major fear being that the enhancement of the power and security of one state meant the diminishment of the security of everyone else (the “security dilemma”). Because of the primitiveness of institutions of interstate diplomacy, the opaqueness of Greek states to one another was far more intense than in modern states, while the crises that built up were often mishandled, out of mutual incomprehension and/or the pressures among states of honor culture. Insofar as interstate life was regulated at all, it was by shifting and complex balances of power between ferociously independent polities.

Under such conditions war was frequent among the Classical poleis, and indeed normal—in the sense that it was the natural way by which serious interstate disputes were settled, for the test of war revealed which polity was actually powerful enough to impose its will. This was the world every Greek statesman faced. The interstate structure did not determine his decisions; but it did push him strongly in certain harsh directions in his decision making, and, conversely, discouraged him from other possibilities. Whatever the problems with Realism as a description of the modern world, in other words, the harsh and unforgiving interstate system of Classical Greece fits the Realist paradigm.

The internal sociocultural-economic characteristics of a state have an impact in terms of state decisions and actions in the international sphere, in antiquity as in the modern age; no Realist theoretician denies this. In terms of general culture, we have seen that statesmen in the Greek poleis, living in a culture that stressed personal honor and status, and the unacceptability of accepting insult or injury, culturally preferred resistance to others, and the use of force. But they acted not merely under the general impact of culture, but under the real constraints in choice imposed by the interstate structure of militarized anarchy; and indeed their cultural preferences (which seem so destructive to us) are themselves likely to have been in part a response to the pressures originating in the interstate anarchy.

It is not surprising that Thucydides, a contemporary observer of this situation, is easily seen as the founder both of Realism and of the systems-analysis approach, since he stresses as the primary impulse in state decision making the pervasive fear for survival caused by a harsh environ-

ment where power relationships among polities were unstable and always shifting. True, Thucydides also includes “nonstructural supplementary variables” in his analysis: the Athenian culture of energy as a factor in Athenian expansion (1.70; 2.63–64); the destructive role played by secondary powers, for example the role of Corcyra in involving Athens in its quarrel with Corinth, or the role of the allies of Sparta (including Corinth) in involving Sparta in their quarrels with Athens. There is even room for the impact on state decision making of individual politicians such as Sthenelaidas at Sparta and Pericles at Athens. But Thucydides also assesses “the truest explanation” of the Peloponnesian War to be a system-level explanation—the shifting balance of power between Athens and Sparta (1.23.6). His approach to causation is certainly a “layered” one. But one should stress again that not even the strictest structural Realists object to “layered” causation—and on the other hand, that in Thucydides’ approach, the “first-cut” analysis emphasizes system-level factors in the causes of the war.¹⁵³

It is important to note that Thucydides’ view of the harsh and unforaging nature of the interstate system in which the Classical Greek poleis existed was not eccentric: the same view was shared by Herodotus a little earlier, and by Xenophon and Plato later. None of these thinkers liked what he saw; they all would have preferred a more peaceful and cooperative interstate world. But this was indeed what they saw, and what they grimly described. Moreover, it is equally important for our understanding that Thucydides viewed characteristics such as a culture of energy as positive—precisely because he thought such characteristics necessary for survival and success in a difficult environment (see 2.63.3). Modern intellectuals, in a tradition going back to John Hobson’s *Imperialism: A Study*, instinctively seek in deep internal sociocultural-economic pathology the explanation for the external success of states; but Thucydides’ attitude here is part of a general intellectual tradition in antiquity that, when it explains imperial expansion in terms of internal state characteristics, seeks to discover the strengths within a state and its culture that allow it to survive and then prevail in a brutal interstate environment. That is instructive.¹⁵⁴

This brings us back to the harsh interstate environment. Clearly, neither a unit-based explanation of warfare and expansion nor a structure-based explanation is a complete explanation without the other; crucial

153. See Doyle 1991: 172–79, esp. 178; Lebow 1991: 156–58.

154. See de Romilly 1977: chap. II.

state decisions are made by human statesmen, not impersonal forces—statesmen who are often reacting in part to domestic politics (which, however, may in turn be reacting to harsh external situations).¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, we are probably on good ground in following Thucydides' conclusion and placing strong explanatory emphasis for wars and imperial expansion(s) among the fifth-century poleis on the sociology of states—on the grim relationships of power existing among them—combined with the common and deep fears among them. Those grim relationships of power, and those deep fears, arose in turn from the fierce competition for survival caused by the pressures of the militarized interstate anarchy in which they all had to live. To take such a position is to put explanatory emphasis—but not, it should be stressed, exclusive emphasis—on the *Primat der Aussenpolitik* (the primacy of external conditions in the creation of state policy) rather than on the *Primat der Innenpolitik* (as so many unit-level analysts do). In a word: the lesson of Thucydides and the Classical poleis is that state decisions about security arise primarily from real concerns about security.¹⁵⁶

155. See Morrow 1988: 75–99; cf. Levy 1991: 227–28.

156. See, e.g., Stevenson 1997a: 39–57, on the outbreak of World War I—ending up explicitly supporting the *Primat der Aussenpolitik*—the primacy of external systemic factors and pressures—although allowing room as well for internal factors and pressures.

The Anarchic Structure of Interstate Relations in the Hellenistic Age

If we now turn from the fifth century B.C. to the third century B.C. and the world of the Hellenistic states—the states with which the Roman Republic historically had to interact—we find that nothing in the character of the interstate system in the eastern Mediterranean has changed except that the scale of states, the resources available to them, and the scale of the constant wars among them have all increased. In what follows, I will (again) admittedly be generalizing. Yet the broad outlines of Hellenistic interstate politics seem clear—and stark—enough.

THE HELLENISTIC WORLD OF WAR

The Greco-Macedonian interstate system that arose in the late fourth century was the result of Alexander the Great's enormous conquests in the eastern Mediterranean, Mesopotamia, and Persia, followed by the struggle for power among Alexander's marshals after his premature death in 323. The system was a heavily militarized anarchy.

As in the Classical period, there were a few informal norms of interstate conduct. But those norms were not always obeyed, and there were no mechanisms for enforcing obedience to them. The informal customs of interstate behavior were those noted in chapter 3—for example, the inviolability of ambassadors or maintaining good faith in sworn treaties. Once more, these norms helped somewhat to ameliorate the prevailing harsh conditions. There were also numerous attempts—sometimes

successful—at mediation and arbitration of disputes between states, or at least between less powerful states. This represented a considerable Greek diplomatic effort toward solving interstate problems peacefully; and such efforts, too, will have helped ameliorate the generally harsh conditions.¹ Further, we have striking instances where quite effective appeals are made by Greek states to Panhellenic sentiment, to the idea that Greeks should help each other and cooperate with each other: we see this, for instance, in the large number of official positive responses from all over the Greek world to the establishment of a new festival for Artemis at Magnesia-on-the-Meander circa 208; or in the Panhellenic theme stressed in Aetolian appeals circa 206 for aid to Cytinium in helping to rebuild the city, damaged by earthquake and war.²

All of this, however, is far from a feeling of community strong enough to prevent war (which was almost continuous), let alone the rule of international law. A typical example of the weakness of international law in the Hellenistic period is *asylia*—the (alleged) immunity of officially recognized places sacred to the gods from military violence. There exist dozens of official decrees on stone by which states grant *asylia* to various sacred sites; yet the fact is that sacred sites were sometimes completely sacked by state armies in this period (Dodona, Dium, Thermum, the Nicephorium at Pergamum)—and no collective physical defense of any such sacred site was ever mounted. The fine words on stone inscriptions should not mislead us as to the true situation.³ We have an intelligent contemporary observer for this period, Polybius of Megalopolis, as we had intelligent contemporary observers (led by Thucydides) for the Classical age; and he is explicit that the primary cause of war in his world was the absence of enforceable international law.⁴ The fact is that competition was as unrestrained among states in the Hellenistic age as in the Classical period, and tensions among them usually ran high; warfare was almost constant, and often on an enormous scale.

This has not always been the predominant depiction of the Hellenistic state-system. From Johann Droysen in the 1870s down through important stud-

1. See Ager 1996: there are 171 known cases in 250 years; compare with 60 known cases in the previous 250 years (above, chap. 3, text at n. 4). But no powerful state ever submitted to arbitration: see Badian 1983: 402.

2. The festival for Artemis Leucophryene: see Dusanic 1983; the Aetolian appeal for aid to Cytinium: Erskine 2001: 164–65. Emphasized by Derow 2003: 57.

3. See Meyer 1999: 461. Similarly: de Souza 1999: 69.

4. Polyb. 5.67.11–68.2, discussed below.

ies published after 2000, prominent scholars have asserted that once the savage struggles among the marshals of Alexander died out after roughly 280 B.C. an equilibrium was established among the successor states to Alexander's vast empire. The successor states—or rather, the successor ruling dynasties (Seleucids, Antigonids, Ptolemies)—accepted their mutual existence. They curtailed their ambitions and limited their interstate goals. A balance of power came into existence: certainly *de facto*, and probably even as conscious policy. Thus Piero Treves went so far as to declare that the Hellenistic kings “never departed, or even dreamt of departing, from an unwritten code of by-laws of war, peace and diplomacy, an etiquette of government, a style of good manners as between brothers (or sisters) which lasted in Europe until Queen Victoria.”⁵ Paul Veyne similarly envisions the Hellenistic powers as living together “in the manner of the nations of Europe in the eighteenth century”: that is, with limited state goals achieved through delicate and sophisticated diplomacy; or, changing his metaphors, he sees these regimes as motivated by “Bismarckian” principles of limited war and maintenance of equilibrium among a plurality of states.⁶ Peter Klose, drawing like Treves and Veyne on an analogy from nineteenth-century Europe, speaks of a Hellenistic “*Konzert*” der *Grossmächte*, living under international law.⁷ Edouard Will in the new *Cambridge Ancient History* describes a political world after about 300 B.C. that, he says, gave birth to the modern conception of large territorial polities with no claims to universal rule and seeking to coexist in equilibrium: a magnificent “experiment.”⁸ And David J. Bederman has recently asserted that the Hellenistic state-system “had a greater potential for stability than any that had existed hitherto in antiquity,” in good part because of the widespread Hellenistic recognition of international law.⁹

Such a conception of the Hellenistic state-system thus conforms to the definition of a true international society of states put forward by the po-

5. Treves 1970: 56. In similar vein: Droysen 1878: 182; Tarn 1913: 1; Rostovtzeff 1957: 23–24, 552–53; 1026–29; Wilcken 1962: 275; Braunert 1964: esp. 80–81; Welles 1965: 220–21; Badian 1968: 5–6 (but he has changed his mind: see below, chap. 6, n. 3).

6. Veyne 1975: 823 (the eighteenth-century analogy), 837–38 (the Bismarckian analogy); cf. also 795 and 800. This is in contrast to Veyne's view of the world of the Classical city-states as a savage jungle (see above, chap. 3, text at n.18).

7. Klose 1982: 80–88.

8. Will 1984: 61. Walbank (1984: 66, cf. 63) recognizes the militarized character of Hellenistic kingship but implies (63) that the Hellenistic system was an orderly world of state interactions. If he meant to say this, he has since changed his mind (see below).

9. Bederman 2001: 43 and n. 63; similar: Mastrocinque 1983: 91–95. Cf. now Hölbl 2001: 131: the long-term foreign policy of the Ptolemies aimed only at achieving a balance of power.

litical scientist Hedley Bull: "An international society exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions."¹⁰ On such a reconstruction of Hellenistic geopolitics, the arrival of Roman power and influence in the Greco-Macedonian Mediterranean constituted a violent disruption of what had been up to then an emerging consensual community of polities.¹¹

But probably only a minority of specialist scholars would assent today to such a benign depiction of the Hellenistic state-system. A grimmer view of interstate relations was first established by Pierre Lévêque's groundbreaking 1968 discussion of the prevalence of war in the Hellenistic period. Lévêque pointed out how much larger the armies of the Hellenistic kings were than the armies of the fifth-century poleis. The citizen field army of Athens in 431 at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War numbered about thirteen thousand infantry and a thousand cavalry. By contrast, the Ptolemaic field army at the battle of Raphia in 217 numbered about seventy-five thousand men, and it confronted a Seleucid army numbering another sixty-eight thousand; the Seleucid army at Magnesia in 189 numbered some sixty thousand infantry and twelve thousand cavalry.¹² With the expansion in size of the armies in the Hellenistic period, the scale of casualties in battles increased as well.¹³ As for the navies of the Hellenistic powers, they were sometimes comparable in numbers of warships to the famous fifth-century Athenian fleet, but the standard warships were themselves much larger (quinquiremes having replaced triremes as the naval standard).¹⁴

Moreover, Hellenistic monarchs were first and foremost generalissimos. The standard public apparel of kings was that of a Macedonian soldier; "une véritable théologie de la victoire" was everywhere publicly proclaimed, including on coinage (obsessively, for instance, in the case of Pyrrhus of Epirus, "the Eagle") and in the honorific titles taken by the

10. Bull 1977: 1.

11. Most recently: Bederman 2001: 43.

12. Lévêque 1968: 270–71. The total size of the Ptolemaic army in the 250s, including reserves and garrison troops, may have approached 240,000 (so App. *Proem.* 10, cf. Lévêque 270). For fifth-century Athens, we find a field army of 13,000 infantry backed by 16,000 reserves: see Thuc. 2.13.6. Similar figures in Diodorus (12.40.4–5): 12,000 infantry in the Athenian field army, backed by 17,000 reserves.

13. See Hanson 1989: 35 and 58.

14. Lévêque 1968: 273–74.

monarchs: *Nikatōr*, *Kallinikos*, *Nikēphoros*, *Anikētos*. And kings not only personally determined foreign relations and grand strategy, but led their armies and fleets into battle in person. Thus of the first fourteen kings of the Seleucid dynasty, twelve died in battle or on campaign, whereas only two died at home (and one of those was assassinated), while as late as 146 Ptolemy VI died at the head of a cavalry charge while attempting to conquer Syria.¹⁵ Even Ptolemy IV, who had a reputation for indolence and debauchery, personally determined the decisive moment of battle and then personally led the victorious charge of the Ptolemaic infantry phalanx at Raphia in 217 (Polyb. 5.85.6–8).

The intensity of this Hellenistic royal ideology of militarism, Lévêque continues, was only natural, for the Hellenistic monarchies were all “nés de la guerre, maintenus par la guerre et dirigés par un aristocratie guerrière grecque.”¹⁶ Indeed, warfare was so endemic with the large monarchies that on Lévêque’s calculations, between 323 and 160 B.C.—a period of more than 160 years—the only years in which there were no major wars involving one or more of the dynasties were 299–297, 249–248, and 204. Meanwhile, in the Aegean and Greece warfare was no less constant among important city-states, and constant as well with the federal leagues of polities.¹⁷ This prevalence of warfare in the Hellenistic world is to be explained, Lévêque argues, primarily because war was the natural way in which the natural antagonisms and competition among states were regulated. Certainly there was an amount of interstate diplomacy, as well as dynastic alliances secured through marriages; and the means existed for buying goodwill (especially with smaller states) via concessions and outright gifts. But at its heart, in Hellenistic interstate relations “la guerre est le recours essentiel,” and—in a phrase strikingly reminiscent of Kenneth Waltz’s general hypothesis regarding the life of states under anarchic international systems—“la guerre est . . . le recours *normal*.”¹⁸ Hellenistic rulers were praised in official inscriptions for being “avid for battle.”¹⁹

15. Seleucid statistics: Bickerman 1938: 13, cf. Walbank 1984: 63. Militaristic images on coinage, militaristic titles of kings, and the theology of victory: Lévêque 1968: 276–79 (on Pyrrhus’s victory coinage: 278 n. 101). Ptolemy VI: see Polyb. 28.21 and 39.7.1, with Eckstein 1995: 30.

16. Lévêque 1968: 276.

17. Ibid. 279 and n. 108. For the assumption that bitter warfare was a constant in the Hellenistic world, see Polyb. 18.3.2–8 (speech of Alexander of Isus in 198).

18. Ibid. 279 (my italics). For Waltz’s general rule, see above, chap. 2, text at n. 45; the parallel conclusion of de Romilly on the earlier Greek period: above, chap. 3, text at n. 28.

19. OGIS 219 (from Troy in the 270s, praising Antiochus I); cf. Plut. *Pyrrh.* 13.1.

As for international etiquette or constraining rules of conduct, one may add to Lévêque that none of the great dynasties refrained from using not merely privateers but outright pirates in open (and, we are told, secret) warfare against rivals. Our evidence comes both from literary sources and from official inscriptions of the victims. The employment of pirates to ravage one's enemies was an Antigonid tradition, going back to Antigonus the One-Eyed in the post-Alexander period (ca. 315), and especially to Demetrius the Besieger (ca. 300), continued by Demetrius's son Antigonus II in his conflict with Athens in the 260s, and by Philip V against Aegean states in 220/219 and again (secretly) from 204.²⁰ King Agathocles of Syracuse employed Apulian pirates against his enemies circa 300; Ptolemy II employed pirates in his wars against the Seleucids, as well as to support rivals of Antigonus II, by spreading terror among those kings' allies; the Seleucid monarch Antiochus III allied himself in the 190s with the most famous pirate gang in the Aegean.²¹

Indeed, the widespread devastation throughout the Greek world caused by the constant wars among the great monarchies is clear, and it becomes clearer the more inscriptions are discovered. One example: in the Ptolemaic-Seleucid war of the 240s (the Laodicean War) the city-state of Smyrna in Asia Minor sided with the Seleucids, while the city-state of Telmessus two hundred miles southeast sided with the Ptolemies, but neither city escaped suffering during the widespread fighting—inscriptions indicate the damage caused both cities by the ravaging of their countryside at the hands of the (respective) enemy armies.²² As Jon Ma has noted, the ravaging of city territory was as common an occurrence in Hellenistic warfare as it was in the Classical period.²³

Lévêque's discussion, finally, stresses the insistent expansionism of the great dynasties. "Il y a eu un impérialisme indéniable chez tous les monarques," an imperialism vigorous and explicit—even among the Ptolemies.²⁴ And unlike most of the Classical poleis, the Hellenistic monarchies were

20. Pervasive use of pirates by Hellenistic monarchies: Garlan 1978: 1–16; Antigonids: Tarn 1913: 86–88 and 172; cf. Walbank 1982: 213–36. Philip V: see now de Souza 1999: 56–57, 75, and 81–82.

21. Agathocles: Dell 1967: 354, with sources; Ptolemy II: Tarn 1913: 86, with sources; Antiochus III: de Souza 1999: 88–90, with sources. King Nabis of Sparta (ruled 207–192 B.C.) also employed pirates when it suited him: de Souza 1999: 84–86, with sources.

22. Smyrna: *OGIS* 220, lines 3–5; Telmessus: *OGIS* 55, line 10.

23. Ma 2002: 44 n. 60. On the damage that the continuous great-power wars in the third-century Greek Mediterranean caused the smaller states, see now the conclusion of Ager 2003: 49.

24. Lévêque 1968: 279.

not averse to appearing as simple aggressors; expansion added to the glory of the king.²⁵

This particular point is demonstrated by the claims of many Hellenistic monarchs to rule over territory simply because they had seized that territory by force: it was, simply, “spear-won land” (δορίκτητος χώρα). This justification for rule was a prominent theme, perhaps naturally enough, in the territorial claims made by the founding generation of the Successor monarchs, a theme appearing repeatedly in public declarations by Ptolemy and Seleucus as well as Antigonus.²⁶ But the justification also appears prominently in the territorial claims made a full century later by Antiochus III, both with regard to Lebanon and Judaea in 218 (to the Ptolemaic regime) and (very strongly) in Thrace in 194 (to the Romans), and by Antiochus IV a generation beyond that.²⁷ The claim to rule simply “by right of the spear,” by right of military conquest, also appears symbolically on the coinage of Cassander as he was establishing his stern regime in Greece about 310, on the coinage of the Macedonian dynast Eupolemus as he was establishing his regime in Caria around 290, and repeatedly on the coinage of the Macedonian warlords who established independent kingdoms in Bactria and western India.²⁸

Even though Lévêque posits that after roughly 280 no monarch’s ambitions extended to the conquest of the whole of Alexander’s old empire (see below, however), he sees the clash of the imperialisms of these monarchies as so continuous and bitter that it eventually exhausted the resources even of these large realms. And he finds a major motive for aggression to be the sheer search for financial booty and profit, via the looting of towns and cities and the seizure of economically important regions from others. Such financial depredations and accumulations were necessary, in turn, to support “les gigantesques préparatifs militaires imposés par la situation générale.”²⁹

25. On the propaganda of the Classical city-states, see above, chap. 3.

26. The first generation of the Successors: see Diod. 18.39.5; 18.43.1; 19.85.3; 19.105.5; 20.76.7; 21.1.5; all based on material from the contemporary historian and official Hieronymus of Cardia: see Billows 1995: 26 and n. 3.

27. Antiochus III: Polyb. 5.67 (Lebanon and Judaea) and 18.51.3–6 (Thrace); Livy 34.58.4–8 (on Thrace, very strongly put; based on Polybian material). Antiochus IV: Polyb. 28.1. Discussions: Mehl 1980/1981: 173–77 and 200–203; Grainger 2002: 134–36; and in general Ma 2002: chap. 1.

28. Discussion of this evidence in Billows 1995: 27–28. The overt claim to rule territory “by right of the spear” also appears with city-states in this period: *Syll.*³ 685 (Itanus and Hierapytna on Crete); cf. Billows 1995: 25.

29. Lévêque 1968: 279–80.

This harsh analysis of interstate life among the Hellenistic powers was furthered by M. M. Austin in 1986. Austin, too, stresses the military origins, the vast armed forces, and the militaristic aura and paraphernalia of the great monarchies; but he adds evidence for unlimited, even universalizing, ambitions. Such ambitions appeared sporadically, depending upon the talents (or self-perceived talents) of individual rulers and their geopolitical situations and resources—but they were not rare. Austin's list of monarchs with open-ended expansionist ambitions includes: Pyrrhus of Epirus in the 280s and 270s; Ptolemy III (to judge from the brutal triumphalism of the Adulis Inscription of 246/245); Philip V the Antigonid, who claimed descent from Philip II and Alexander the Great; Philip's contemporary Antiochus III the Great, who (re)extended Seleucid rule into Persia, Afghanistan, and western India in 212–206 before turning toward Ptolemaic Egypt, western Asia Minor, and eventually Europe (both Philip and Antiochus, according to Polybius, had ambitions for ἡ τῶν ὅλων δυναστεία); and Antiochus's son Antiochus IV, who came close to conquering Ptolemaic Egypt in 170–168 and died attempting to reconquer Persia in 163. The Seleucids even sought to rename the Indian Ocean after themselves (Plin. *NH* 1.167–68). To this list of conquerors one may add Attalus I of Pergamum, whose ambitions in Asia Minor were very wide, and Ptolemy VI, who died in battle attempting to destroy the Seleucids in Syria in 146.³⁰ As Austin says of Polybius's depiction of the Seleucids: "The chief business of the monarchy is assumed to be war."³¹

Polybius was outraged by the alleged pact between Philip V and Antiochus III to divide up the Ptolemaic empire once a child was on the throne at Alexandria (Polyb. 3.2.8 and 15.20; cf. 14.1a: 203/202 B.C.), but his outrage was directed at the destruction of a child by adults (15.20.2)—not because he viewed the conduct of the kings as a violation of international law or a contravention of a recognized system of balance of power. Indeed, insofar as a balance of power existed in the eastern Mediterranean after about 280, it was informal, deeply unstable—and certainly not by intent, the creation of a conscious *völkerrechtliche*

30. The list: Austin 1986: 457–58. Austin is incorrect to assert (457) that the Ptolemies ceased to be military men after Ptolemy IV—as the battlefield death of Ptolemy VI shows. On Antiochus III, cf. also Gruen 1984: 612–13: "Antiochus' imperialist appetite was insatiable." The government of Ptolemy IV believed the same was true of Cleomenes III of Sparta: see Polyb. 5.35.9. Ptolemy VI: Polyb. 39.7, with Walbank 1979: 737–38. Attalus I of Pergamum: see Polyb. 4.48.7 and 10–11. His successor Eumenes II: Livy 35.13.9 (from Polybian material: Briscoe 1981: 1 and 162).

31. Austin 2003: 125.

Ordnung. It was the consequence of frustrated imperial ambitions—and the instinctive maneuvers of major states to prevent domination by one successor dynasty.³² And although modern scholars have expressed doubts about the pact to partition the Ptolemaic dominions (unjustifiably, as I will argue below in chapter 7), the point for us here is that Polybius expected his audience to believe that such cataclysmic political-military events occurred in their world.³³ As Polybius has the Rhodians declare as a general rule: “Every monarchy hates political equality, and strives to make all men subject and obedient to it—or at least, as many as possible” (21.22.8).³⁴ Not surprisingly, Polybius saw Hellenistic interstate politics as a ruthless contest, with the prevalence of “evil acts,” including violation of friendship and treaties.³⁵

Lévêque viewed the militarism and expansionism of the Hellenistic monarchies as primarily due to the effects of an anarchic and heavily militarized international system (see above). By contrast, Austin seeks the explanation for continuous warfare and the aggressive expansionism of Hellenistic kings primarily in the internal structures of the monarchies themselves. It is another example, of course, of unit-attribute theory.³⁶

Austin underlines, first, that each of the great dynasties was a usurper state that had come to power through successful violence in the wars among the marshals of Alexander. The regimes thus faced a continual problem of legitimacy. The problem was both external, to hold on to as much “spear-won territory” (*doriktētos chōra*) as possible in the face of fierce competitors, and internal—because pretenders to the various thrones were rife. In this situation, military prestige—as it had been from the beginning—was the preeminent route to legitimization and hence to security. This helps explain the militaristic aura, paraphernalia, and ideology with which kings were surrounded.³⁷ One may cite here the discussion of kingship in the *Suda*, which is of Byzantine date but derives from Hellenistic material:

32. Despite Klose 1982. See, rightly, Lévêque 1968: 279; Schmitt 1974: 73–74; and now Ager 2003. Cf. the comments of Jervis 2001: 287, on the nature even of the classic eighteenth-century European balance.

33. So, rightly, Austin 1986: 457.

34. On this passage as pointing toward monarchical desire for unlimited empire, see Walbank 1993: 1723.

35. See esp. Polyb. 13.3.1–2 and 8; cf. Eckstein 1995: 86–87.

36. On unit-attribute theory, see above, chap. 2, text at n. 57; chap. 3, text at n. 144.

37. Austin 1986: 458–59. Mehl (1980/1981) attempts to downplay the concept of spear-won land as the basis of the territory of every Hellenistic monarchy; but see the criticisms of Hornblower 1985: 317 n. 8; Ma 2002: 32 and 51.

Basileia: Kingship is not gained from descent [*φύσις*], nor from legitimacy [*δίκαιον*]; rather, it comes from the ability to lead armies and to manage affairs. This was the case both with Philip and with the Successors. For Alexander's biological son received no help from his being kin to Alexander, owing to his weak character, but those who were in no way related to Alexander became kings over virtually the whole inhabited world.³⁸

Thus we are told that the rank and file of Macedonian armies believed bluntly that brilliance in war was what established the right to rule (Plut. *Demetr.* 44.5). And Polybius, equally bluntly, asserts that the primary characteristic of a successful king (*τὸ δὲ μέγιστον*) is courage and ability in war (4.77.3).

In sum, the instability of the legitimacy of the monarchies, combined with the consequent royal ideology of strength, meant that successful warfare and conquest were necessities for Hellenistic kings: "a weak king was a contradiction in terms."³⁹ Not even as ferocious a militarist as Antiochus III escaped criticism when, as he aged, his capacity to execute his huge geopolitical ambitions seemed to fade.⁴⁰ But strong kings achieved great military success—which brought imperial expansion. Thus the dichotomy between the politically unstable, conquering, and warlike age of the immediate Successors and the subsequent allegedly stable period of the third and second centuries has been very much overdrawn; the age of the Successors never really came to an end.⁴¹

Like Lévêque, Austin finds a subsidiary but important cause for the constant warfare of the kings in the huge amounts of booty accruing from conquest. Booty meant wealth for the king and his government, and great wealth was almost as much of a necessity for Hellenistic monarchs as was success in war: like a weak king, "a poor king or a stingy king was a contradiction in terms."⁴² This was because a monarch's wealth helped

38. Importance of this passage for the ideology of Hellenistic kingship: see Walbank 1984: 63; and Billows 1995: 20–21. On the general point, cf. also Gehrke 1982: 247–49.

39. Austin 1986: 457. See Plut. *Demetr.* 44.3 (explicit on the impact of perceived weakness), or Polyb. 11.34.14–16, on how Antiochus III attained a great reputation by intimidating his subjects by his courage and energy. Conversely, Polybius views Ptolemy IV with contempt because he was "too much inclined for peace" (5.87.3); the result was disaster for the Ptolemies (see Ager 2003: 48–49). Yet even Ptolemy IV, as Polybius well knew, had battlefield heroics to his credit (5.85.6–8).

40. See the stunning general remark of Polyb. 15.37, and the heavy criticism leveled specifically at Antiochus's military weakness of decision after suffering initial defeats at Roman hands in 191: App. *Syr.* 28 (probably from Polybian material).

41. Austin 1986: 456–57. Austin here is reacting especially against the view of Welles 1965: 220–21. In agreement with Austin see now Ma 2002: 4, and Ager 2003.

42. Austin 1986: 459; cf. now Ma 2002: 8–9.

preserve the support of those men whose support was a requirement for regime survival. Kings took care, first, to enrich their soldiers—with high pay, with loot, and with periodic special donatives.⁴³ Hence both Antiochus III and Ptolemy IV promised their troops vast rewards of money if victorious at the battle of Raphia (Polyb. 5.83.6)—while failure to provide soldiers with good pay quickly led to chaos (see 5.57.7–8). In addition, the distribution of large gifts to royal officials and close advisers, the king's official *Philoi* (Friends) who were necessary for the running of the regime, secured their crucial support and loyalty—which was by no means assured in the absence of such large gifts.⁴⁴ Austin thus paints a picture of a constantly hungry military and governmental machine, which created the wars on which it depended. The reconstruction strikingly parallels the famous theory of the “objectless” mechanism of imperial expansion developed by Joseph Schumpeter.⁴⁵

But it is unclear how far to push the idea that Hellenistic kings habitually went to war simply for loot to keep their regimes in operation. Victory in war brought spoils, and no doubt the spoils were very welcome. But ordinarily the proceeds from any military campaign would be dwarfed by the annual and relatively peaceful inflow of tax collection from a king's large territory. This was especially true of the Seleucids and the Ptolemies.⁴⁶ Moreover, wars not only cost a great deal of money to organize and wage, but they were inherently risky as investments: after all, one might lose. Even with gaining control of whole provinces the issue of financial profit is not simple. Although in the third and second centuries the Seleucids and Ptolemies fought six wars over the economically rich triangle of Lebanon–Judaea–southern Syria, kings also sought control of regions that brought them little or no profit—in the hope of strategic gain, and/or from fear of other powers.⁴⁷ Austin points out Jerome's claim that Ptolemy III reaped forty thousand talents from his campaign against the Seleucids in southeastern Asia Minor and Syria in 246/245: this would be three times the annual inflow of the taxes of

43. Austin 1986: 463–65.

44. Ibid. 462–63.

45. Schumpeter 1951: 25, 29, cf. 3: “Created by the wars that required it, the machine now created the wars it required.” Billows (1995: 20–23) is similar to Austin on the monarchical war machine. On the influence of Schumpeter-like thinking in modern studies of ancient states, see Eckstein 2000: esp. 866.

46. Ptolemaic tax revenues: Turner 1984: 151–54. Seleucid tax revenues: Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 67–71.

47. Hence Philip V's conquests in poverty-stricken inland Illyria in 214–212: see Walbank 1940: 80–81.

Egypt.⁴⁸ It is an impressive instance of a *Beutezug*, but the question is how often such events occurred. Philip V developed a bad reputation by sacking Greek cities in the Hellespont in 202 and selling their populations into slavery (Polyb. 15.21–24); the purpose of his ruthless conduct may have been to raise funds to build a new war fleet—but the purpose of the new war fleet was to aid large-scale imperial expansion in the eastern Mediterranean, not the maintenance of the normal running of government in Macedon. Similarly, Antiochus IV reaped a vast profit from his invasion of Egypt in 170–168, and displayed the loot in a famous festival procession at Daphne near Antioch in 166, but Antiochus's purpose in Egypt in 170–168 was not mere looting—it was conquest and control, which was prevented only by Roman intervention.⁴⁹

Lévêque and Austin have transformed our understanding of the militaristic and expansionist character of Hellenistic monarchy, and Hellenistic interstate politics will never look the same.⁵⁰ But it will not do to ascribe the continuous tension and wars, the continuous and bitter interstate competition for power and influence, merely to the internal characteristics of the dynastic regimes—though those characteristics now (rightly) make a great impression. Aside from the weaknesses of the Schumpeterian war-for-sheer-loot thesis, there is a deeper problem in ascribing Hellenistic wars to the nature of the great Hellenistic monarchies: Hellenistic wars were by no means restricted to the great monarchies. Lévêque makes this point briefly,⁵¹ but more can be said.

Consider, for instance, the Peloponnese in the fifteen years from 251 down to 236 B.C. We find warfare almost every year: between Sparta and Megalopolis; between Sparta and Mantinea, Megalopolis and Sicyon; between Sicyon and Alexander the tyrant of Corinth; between Argos and Alexander the tyrant of Corinth; between the Achaean League and Argos; between the Achaean League and the Aetolian League; between the Achaean League and Sparta; between the Aetolian League and Sparta. During this same period the Aetolian League invaded the Peloponnese three times (in 244, 241, and 236), carrying off thousands of people to be sold as slaves (Plut. *Cleom.* 18.3)—and eventually winning control

48. Austin 1986: 465.

49. Philip V's profitable atrocities: Walbank 1982: 228–29. Antiochus IV's large aims in Egypt: Gera 1998: 138–40. Antiochus's siege of Alexandria was a serious effort: Broshi and Eshel 1997: 120–29.

50. On the constant instability and violence of Hellenistic high politics, see now Ma 2000: 357 and 358, and 2002: 5 (very emphatic); Beston 2000: 315 (both referring to Austin).

51. Lévêque 1968: 285.

over four cities.⁵² Attica in these same years was devastated by raiding from both the Aetolian League and the Achaean Leagues.⁵³

William R. Thompson has recently suggested that in the modern world a minority of militarized rivalrous dyads accounts for a disproportionate number of interstate conflicts.⁵⁴ In antiquity there certainly were such militarized dyadic rivalries, poisoned relationships with recidivist wars: Athens and Sparta, the Seleucids and the Ptolemies, Rome and Carthage. But the Peloponnese seems a dark example of the classic Hobbesian war of all against all. The historian Polybius refers to it as “the continual and destructive wars of the Peloponnesians against each other” (2.62.3). And the reason he gives for the chaos (5.106.5) is similar to the reasons he gives for the ferocious competition among the kings (21.22.8): war among the Peloponnesian states was natural (*φύσει*), because they were “committed both to their own freedom and to ambitions for supremacy, and none was disposed to yield first place to his neighbor.” Plutarch’s sources said that the third-century Peloponnese was literally an armed camp (*Arat.* 6.1). These are classic descriptions of an interstate system of militarized anarchy.

As in Classical Athens, the leading public officials of both the Achaean League and the Aetolian League were called “generals” (*stratēgoi*); as in Classical Athens, this was not an honorific title. Yet none of the fighting here involved a major monarchy. John Ma finds conditions similar in Asia Minor, with continual wars caused by frontier disputes even between small Hellenistic poleis; and they were caused as well by what he terms widespread “mini-imperialisms.” Ma has also shown in detail both the militaristic culture of these city-states and the militarized nature of the Hellenistic landscape itself—dotted everywhere with forts to defend agricultural production.⁵⁵ Moreover, the imposition of the most overt form of subjection—the imposition of a foreign garrison—was as much a characteristic of these mini-imperialists as it was of the great powers: Teos over Cyrbessus; Gortyn over the island of Caudos;

52. Detailed discussion: Walbank 1933: chaps. II and III.

53. Plut. *Arat.* 33–34; *Syll.*³ 545.

54. Thompson 1999: 3–6.

55. Ma 2000: 337–72. Thus Ma takes it as natural that when the hegemony of the Seleucids weakened in northern Syria after 150, the cities there immediately began to war against each other (359, with sources). A similar violent situation arose among the city-states of southern Ionia and western Caria after the ending of Seleucid hegemony in 188: see Ma 2002: 251–52. Another example: once the grimly enforced Rhodian hegemony over the Lycian cities disappeared after 167, there is much evidence of continual intercity wars: discussion in Ma 2002: 252–53. Compare Hdt. 6.42 on the failure even of Persian hegemony to stop the raids of Greek poleis in Ionia against one another.

Miletus over Pedasa, Myous, Patmos, Leros, and Lepsia.⁵⁶ It was natural for Greeks to compare states to fighting cocks, contesting ferociously with each other out of a desire not to become inferior to, or give way to, the other (see Polyb. 1.58.7–9; Ael. *VH* 2.28—a saying of Themistocles). Not surprisingly, Hellenistic cities in the Aegean region—cities both large and small—are noticeable for their formidable walls. They needed the protection; and the walls are testimony to civic determination to provide it.⁵⁷

Thus at the level of state activity below that of the great monarchies, war and conquest were normal too; when a Cretan's epitaph proclaims that he had saved his fatherland, the tiny city-state of Anopolis, "from the enslaving spears of neighbors," this should be taken as a real situation.⁵⁸ Polybius decries the destructive ferocity with which wars among the Greek city-states were fought in his own time—even the brutal conduct of his own father against Messenia as *stratēgos* of the Achaean League (23.15.1–16.1; cf. 24.2.3). In far-off Bactria, meanwhile, the Greek kings engaged in a constant struggle for survival against their many surrounding enemies, as well as in violent rivalries among themselves; not surprisingly, victory symbolism dominates their coinage.⁵⁹ Or take the Victory Monument of Attalus I, ruler of Pergamum in western Asia Minor. The monument was dedicated circa 225 and records Attalus's successful campaigns against numerous enemies during the first years of his regime: against the Tolistoagian Celts; against the Tolistoagian Celts and the Tectosagian Celts in combination with Antiochus "the Hawk," a pretender to the Seleucid throne; against Antiochus "the Hawk" alone (several times); against a local dynast named Lysias; against generals of the legitimate Seleucid king Seleucus III. Attalus I's Victory Monument is thus a monument to the prevailing Hellenistic chaos.⁶⁰ Similar conclusions can be drawn from the violent career of Achaeus, the Seleucid viceroy in Asia Minor and (later) pretender to the throne, between 223 and 214/213: not only did Achaeus engage in perpetual large-scale warfare with Attalus of Pergamum and make an attempt to invade Syria (which failed), but he also managed to intervene militarily in war between Rhodes and

56. See Chaniotis 2002: 99–100 (with sources).

57. See McNicoll 1997.

58. War among poleis normal: Ma 2000: 337; the Cretan epitaph (*SEG* 8.269): 352.

59. Bactria: see now Holt 1999. Obsessive victory symbolism of the Bactrian kings: see Lévêque 1968: 278.

60. English text of Attalus's Victory Monument: Austin 1981: no. 197; discussion of the events: McShane 1964: 59–61.

Byzantium (220), and war between Selge and Pednelissus (218), and to conquer most of the cities of Pisidia and Pamphylia.⁶¹

Because warfare in the Hellenistic period was almost continuous no matter what the specific internal sociopolitical structures of the states involved in the fighting—democratic city-states and oligarchic city-states, tyrannies, federal leagues, and monarchies both great and small—the answer to why warfare was endemic within the Hellenistic state-system obviously cannot be ascribed to one type of internal sociopolitical institution (such as the militarized large monarchy). No doubt the various deeply militarized cultures within the units that made up the system themselves contributed significantly to the general atmosphere of aggression, competition, and suspicion; recent scholars have not been wrong on this, and they have corrected earlier misimpressions concerning the stability of Hellenistic interstate relations. But since all the different political types of states, as well as large, medium-sized, and small states, were involved in endemic warfare, a great part of the answer here must lie not in the individual nature of the units making up the system but rather in the characteristics of the system itself. As Waltz puts it, all interactions occur at the level of the units (the states), but “the implications of state interactions cannot be known, or intelligently guessed at, without knowledge of the situation within which interactions occur.” Or to adopt the formulation of Barry Strauss, we need to examine not only the actors but the theater in which they were forced to act.⁶² The Hellenistic states created the interstate system they endured; but it is also true to say that the system in turn put severe pressure on them, that their cultures were a result of their harsh environment—which explains why every type of Hellenistic state, in terms of internal organization, size, and structure, was consistently involved in warfare.⁶³ Rostovtzeff sums up the pressures of the interstate situation in words that Waltz might have written:

The sound economic development [of the Hellenistic period] was first stunted and then gradually atrophied [by] the constant warfare that raged without interruption all over the Hellenistic world. . . . These endless wars became a real calamity for the Greek world. It was not only that large tracts of land were devastated, cities pillaged, and their residents sold into slavery. Much more important was the fact that the wars forced

61. Discussion and evidence in Ma 2002: 58. Achaeus's symbol was a ferocious eagle seizing a wreath: *ibid.* 58 n. 20.

62. Waltz 1979: 66; Strauss 1997: 127.

63. The variety of different types of states all involved in the same destructive behavior is, of course, a central observation against unit-attribute theory: Waltz 1979: 26, 36, 67; cf. Rose 1998: 148 (see above, chap. 3, text at nn. 146 and 150).

the Hellenistic states, both great and small, to concentrate their efforts on military preparations . . . , thus wasting enormous sums of money.⁶⁴

STRUCTURAL PRESSURES AND SELF-HELP

Just as in Classical Greece, then, so in the larger Hellenistic Mediterranean the fact of almost continuous interstate warfare can be attributed in great part to the prevailing interstate system of militarized anarchy. Despite serious and occasionally successful attempts at peaceful resolution of at least some conflicts (especially between lesser states),⁶⁵ this was fundamentally a system without much international law or the mechanisms to enforce it, where security was scarce and attained only by accumulated power and influence; units were socialized to depend upon “self-help”: militarism, obsessive ideology of victory, a habit of plundering and enslaving where possible. The Hellenistic state-system thus actually fostered militarism, conflict, and aggression, and made interstate competition ferocious, and war likely.⁶⁶ It seems a classic case where pressures to emulate the military capabilities of one’s neighbors and competitors—the alternative being to be dominated or even destroyed—produced a regression toward Waltzian “functional similarity of units” within the system. A world was created where all states were ready to use force to settle disputes, and where war was normal (natural) within an overall atmosphere of violence and potential violence from which no one could escape. “Why speak to me of justice for my neighbor,” Antigonos II is supposed to have said to a philosopher (Plut. *Mor.* 330E), “when I am besieging my neighbor’s city?” Antigonos was a serious man.⁶⁷

In such a situation, it is not surprising that along with aggressiveness we find a wide tradition that depicts Hellenistic leaders as obsessively worrying about creating military security for their realms and people.⁶⁸ Hence Theocritus’s praise of Ptolemy II for providing the Egyptian populace with security from military threats:

His ships are always victorious at sea. . . . How many horsemen, how many infantrymen with flashing bronze shields flock to his standard! . . . His

64. Rostovtzeff 1957: 4; with which see Austin 1986: 452.

65. See text above at n. 1.

66. On such systems: Waltz 1979: 102–28, and Wohlforth 2001; cf. Waltz 1988: 615–20.

67. On Antigonos still worthwhile is Tarn 1913: 247–53. His attraction to Stoic philosophy: Erskine 1990: 79–84. On regression toward functional similarity of units within an anarchic system, see above, chap. 2, text at n. 15.

68. See now Beston 2000: 318 (with multiple sources); cf. Eckstein 1995: 273–74.

people attend peacefully to their tasks, feeling completely secure. Never—no, never!—have enemy troops crossed the teeming Nile, never invaded the villages, uttering ferocious shouts; never has a warship landed breastplated plunderers on Egypt's shore, intent on raiding the cattle herds.⁶⁹

Idyll 17.83–92

The militarized Hellenistic anarchy led similarly to a passion among Hellenistic Greek states—large, medium, and small—to avenge any defeat and loss of territory and resources by reconquering them as soon as possible. The widespread emphasis on reconquest in propaganda represents a reassertion of injured status (though of course the regaining of real resources was also fundamental). An example of the action of a powerful state here is Antiochus III's reconquest of Asia Minor after the Seleucids had lost a good part of this vast region in the 240s and 230s: major efforts were repeatedly mounted, with varied but ultimate success, in 223–220, 216–213, 203–201, and 197–196. An example of the action of a middle-sized state in this respect is the determined Rhodian reconquest of its mainland territories in 199–197 (taken by Philip V of Macedon in 201)—an effort mounted despite a major earthquake in 199 that damaged Rhodian military resources. An example of the action of a small state here is the stern reconquest of its lost territory of Arsinoë by the town of Nagidus in Cilicia in the 250s. This is the visible impact of the self-help system, at work on every size and type of Hellenistic state.⁷⁰

This militarization of the anarchic interstate system of the Hellenistic age was further worsened, as was true in the previous Classical period, by three important phenomena.

First was the persistent multipolarity of the state-system. From 323 to roughly 188 B.C. no single state was ever able to achieve a hegemonic position in the eastern Mediterranean, nor could even two states achieve a hegemonic bipolarity. Yet a structural situation where a multiplicity of competing states are relatively evenly matched in power (multipolarity)—a situation prevailing not only at the level of the three great successor monarchies but also in multiple local situations involving local powers

69. Cf. the inscriptions honoring Philetaerus the warlord of Pergamum for his long defense of Ionian cities against fierce attacks from inland Celts; see McShane 1964: 36–39; or the praise of Antiochus III as protector of his subjects from Thracian attack: *App. Syr.* 6. Theocritus's emphasis on defense does not prevent him from hoping as well that the king will expand his territory (93); there is no contradiction in such thinking; see Liska 1978: 5–6. On the aggressiveness of the first three Ptolemies, see esp. Polyb. 5.34.3–9.

70. Antiochus III: see Ma 2002: chap. 2 *passim*; Rhodes: *ibid.* 81; Nagidus: *ibid.* 49 (with collected evidence). The parallel with the determined Punic efforts to regain lost status and power through new conquests in the period 237–219 is clear (see below, chap. 5).

all over European Greece and western Asia Minor—is the most unstable and war-prone of all interstate structures.⁷¹

Second, as in the Classical period the armed forces of the Hellenistic age were not easily distinguishable as either offensive or defensive in nature, precisely because they were capable of either offense or defense—while also being much larger in size than previously. Further, these forces were employed within a military environment that was dominated by the ideology, the strategy, and the technique of the offense. Alexander himself had shown the way here, providing both the ideological and the practical model: the Macedonian conquest of the Persian empire was one of history's greatest examples of a devastating strategic offensive. The Diadochoi lived in Alexander's shadow, consciously imitating his strategically aggressive spirit; so did Hannibal.⁷² Further, the fundamental inability of states to defend their territories against the economic, social, and political damage done by invading armies—except at the risk of set-piece battle—remained the same as in the Classical period (the effectiveness of border fortifications being dependent upon the vagaries of geography, and fortifications being in any case hugely expensive). The strategic situation here had, in fact, worsened, for the ability of field armies to take walled cities by direct assault had now greatly increased because of the more frequent use of sophisticated siege machinery. Thus the vulnerability of states to damaging enemy attack no longer ended, as it usually did in the fifth century, at the city walls.⁷³

As we have seen in chapter 3 above, international-relations theorists argue that a situation where the offensive is dominant in ideology, strategy, and technique, where all forces are easily seen as potentially offensively oriented, and where all states are vulnerable to damaging attack and so have exceptionally high security requirements, is precisely a situation where every state will be heavily armed, mutual insecurity and conflicts of interest will increase, and interstate structures of trust and cooperation will be very difficult to establish. As we also saw in chapter 3, the

71. Discussion: above, chap. 2, text at n. 47; cf. chap. 3, text at nn. 54 and 116.

72. The enormous impact of Alexander's reputation upon the Successors: see Sirinelli 1994. Pro-Hannibal historians compared Hannibal to Alexander: see Groag 1929: 14–15. Hannibal's judgment of Alexander as the greatest general of all time: Livy 35.14.5–12, cf. 14.5–7, drawing the parallel between Alexander's invasion of Persia and his own invasion of Italy (cf. also App. *Syr.* 9–10 and Plut. *Flam.* 21). Polybius draws the same parallel: see 3.6–13.

73. See above, chap. 3, text at n. 136. Van Evera (1998: 36) notes how a similar deadly impact on ancient Chinese diplomatic relations in approximately this period (the "Warring-States Period" of 453–221 B.C.) caused by an increase in offensive military power, especially via new types of siege machines.

situation leads to a predilection toward interstate assertiveness (based on a perception that the projection of an image of strength is a practical necessity), and a fear of the perception of weakness. The Hellenistic state-system continues to fit this model.⁷⁴

A third factor leading to instability and war in the Hellenistic state-system was—again as in the Classical period—the prevailing primitiveness of diplomatic practice. Our sources do reveal an increase in the frequency of friendly diplomatic contacts between polities: a large number of third-party arbitrations or mediations of disputes, a significant number of grants of mutual citizenship between the populations of separate cities.⁷⁵ This is sometimes said to reach a high point in the federal leagues, large political entities made up of numerous separate polities: the Achaean League; the Aetolian League. But these leagues were warlike and expansionist powers, so they should not be viewed simply as exemplars of harmony.⁷⁶ And the major fact remains that, as in the Classical period, there were no permanent ambassadors or diplomatic missions sent abroad by Hellenistic states. The absence of permanent ambassadors had the same destabilizing consequences as in the Classical period: no continual contact between competitors in the interstate arena (the type of contact that modern states take for granted); no continual flow of mutual information; no regular mechanisms to warn states in advance about potentially troubling military or policy developments elsewhere, or to caution the prospective perpetrators of such actions concerning the problems being created; and hence no institutional means of averting or defusing at an early (and hence easier) stage of events the possible severe conflicts of interest between states. Envoys were most often sent abroad to competing states only when a crisis with such a state loomed; the dangerous diplomatic myopia of the powers, typical of the Classical age, remained unchanged.⁷⁷

Equally significant was that when envoys were in fact sent abroad in a crisis, the diplomacy among Hellenistic states involved in conflicts of interest was usually compellence diplomacy—the same harsh diplomacy of coercion we saw among the Classical poleis. When strains in relations

74. See above, chap. 3, text at n. 111. Hellenistic concern for perceptions of strength and fears of perception of weakness: see Ma 2002: 8–9, cf. 82–102.

75. Arbitrations among small Hellenistic states: above, n. 1. On the increasing incidence of *isopoliteia* among small Hellenistic states, see Gawantka 1975.

76. The institutions of the Achaean League: Walbank, 1979: 406–14. Its expansionist policies: see Urban: 1979. The institutions of the Aetolian League: Funke 1985. Its expansionist policies: see Scholten 2000: chaps. 1, 2, and 4.

77. Ancient diplomatic myopia: above, chap. 3, text at n. 90. A stunning example of Hellenistic diplomatic incompetence, based on ignorance of previously existing interstate

between states reached a crisis, their diplomatic response was most often public demands on each other backed by threats of force—and no one was bluffing.⁷⁸ Hellenistic historical writers give the impression that because of considerations of honor (which remained as intense a Greek cultural value in the Hellenistic period as in the Classical age), and equally because of the need to protect state interests, prestige, and status, such public and coercive diplomacy made compromise and deescalation of a crisis very difficult. There are numerous examples in our sources of this Hellenistic reliance upon coercive diplomacy during a crisis. Sometimes, indeed, the outcome was peaceful, because of the submission of the weaker party.⁷⁹ Often, however, such diplomacy led to war, as in following example. The Rhodians demand the abolition of newly imposed Byzantine tolls on commerce passing through the Straits of Propontis—tolls that the Byzantines in turn have been forced to impose on commercial traffic in order to buy off the aggressions threatening them from neighboring Celtic tribes. The result is a typical public confrontation:

The Rhodians were aroused to anger because of both their own financial losses and those suffered by their friends. They sent an embassy to demand that the Byzantines abolish the tolls levied on shipping. The Byzantines were not disposed to give in on anything and were persuaded to oppose the Rhodian demands. They thought that their magistrates Hecatodoron and Olympiodorus had spoken correctly to the Rhodian envoys. At that point the Rhodian envoys left without accomplishing anything. And upon the return of their envoys, the Rhodians voted for war.

Polyb. 4.47.3–6

Nevertheless, the Rhodians did attempt a second embassy, making the same demands. But the Byzantines rejected this second Rhodian embassy as well; they “stood firm” (Polyb. 4.50.7 and 10).⁸⁰

This harsh and indeed primitive aspect of Hellenistic diplomacy means that (once again) the modern international-relations Constructivists with their stress on the theoretically peaceable impact of a communitarian dialogue among states has little relevance to the course of Hellenistic in-

treaties (the states involved are the Achaean League and—even more significant—the allegedly sophisticated Ptolemaic government): Polyb. 22.7–9.

78. On this phenomenon among the Classical poleis, see above, chap. 3, text at n. 100.

79. Submission to avoid war: see, e.g., Polyb. 1.88.8–12 (Rome and Carthage in 237 B.C. in the crisis over Sardinia); Livy 31.16.5 (Philip V and four cities in the Chersonese in 200 B.C.).

80. Other cases where diplomacy in a crisis simply degenerated into verbal altercation: Livy 35.17 (envoys from various city-states arguing violently with Antiochus III; based

terstate politics. To be sure, there were significant attempts at a more communitarian Hellenistic discourse, as we see with the profusion of attempts at third-party arbitrations and mediations (and even in the occasional extension of mutual citizenships). But the impact of such phenomena on the ongoing interstate violence that continued at all levels appears to have been minimal. Hence, too, the Constructivist criticism of Realist theory on grounds of being too pessimistic about interstate interactions also does not hold up for the Hellenistic age.⁸¹

The crucial elements of the Hellenistic system of states should now be clear: anarchy; militarization; multipolarity; the offensive as ideology, strategy, and technique; the primitive character of interstate diplomacy. These elements all point to the conclusion that the violence characteristic of Hellenistic international politics was shaped in good part by the characteristics and the structure of the Hellenistic state-system itself, which as a system was inherently war-prone—and by states' desire simply to survive within an extremely harsh environment.

As in the Classical period, ancient writers were well aware of the grim nature of Hellenistic interstate relations. Here is Plutarch, describing relations between the monarchs Pyrrhus and Lysimachus after their successful mutual dismemberment of the regime of Demetrius the Besieger in Macedon in the early 280s:

The treaty was advantageous to them and for the moment prevented war between them. But soon they recognized that this was not the end of their enmity; rather, the division of territory was a cause for quarrels and disputes. Their grasping for more [*pleonexia*] could not be limited by sea or mountain or uninhabited wilderness; nor did the boundaries between Europe and Asia set a limit to their desires. So how, if their possessions bordered on each another, could they not commit wrongs, or remain within their territorial limits? Naturally disposed to envy and plotting, they fought each other constantly.

Pyrrh. 12.2–3

on Polybian material); Polyb. 5.67.11–68.2 (discussed below). Examples of war being chosen instead of submission: see Plut. *Pyrrh.* 27 (Pyrrhus and Sparta in 272); Polyb. 4.25–26 (the Aetolian League rejects demands of the Hellenic Symmachy of Macedon in 220).

81. See above, chap. 2, text at n. 79 (on Constructivist ideals and theory), and chap. 3, text at n. 109 (on their irrelevance to the polis system of the Classical Greeks). It is unlikely that our Hellenistic sources have passed over many successful negotiations that by true mutual compromise defused crises between significant states, and that our evidence on Hellenistic diplomacy is thus greatly skewed. The historical writers were intensely interested in crises between significant states, and not just those that ended in war; this is precisely why we know of numerous cases of crisis where in the end there was no war—but the reason was because one side gave in.

Plutarch offers no analysis beyond the personal failings of the two kings. But Polybius, our most politically sophisticated contemporary observer of Hellenistic interstate politics, gives us more of a system-level analysis. True, when explaining to his audience the specific causes of specific wars, Polybius tends to emphasize various emotional conditions (primarily anger or fear) or the cold calculations of immediate geopolitical advantage (i.e., greed) that prevailed in the leaderships of the various states. That is: his analysis, like that of most modern scholars of antiquity, rarely goes beyond a focus on the units within the system; and in terms of causation he rarely goes further than to trace backward in time the origins of specific quarrels between polities—or sometimes to note tempting opportunities that suddenly opened for them.⁸² But occasionally Polybius does raise his gaze from unit-level analysis to consider the wider political field, and then he points to the anarchy of the Hellenistic system as a whole, as well as to its militarization, as important factors that fostered warfare instead of the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Thus in discussing the conflicting claims of Ptolemies and Seleucids over Coele Syria, depicted in terms similar to the above description of the conflicting claims of Pyrrhus and Lysimachus over Macedon, he gives the basis of each claim in the context of the diplomatic negotiations—or rather, the harsh posturing and confrontation—that preceded the outbreak of the Fourth Syrian War in 217 B.C. (5.67.1–10). But then he adds this commentary:

These and similar claims and arguments were constantly repeated by one side or the other in the course of the embassies and counterembassies and the conferences that occurred. But there was no possibility of actually arriving at any result, because . . . there was no one to interpose between the two sides with the power of blocking or restraining the side that seemed disposed to transgress the boundaries of justice. . . . The consequence was that both sides grew weary of sending embassies and there was no prospect of a peaceful resolution, and so in the spring [of 217] Antiochus gathered his forces for the purpose of invading Coele Syria, and Ptolemy dispatched reinforcements to block him.

Polyb. 5.67.11–68.2

A working system of international law is possible only when there is an effective mechanism of enforcement. Polybius demonstrates forcefully here that he knew no such mechanism existed in his world, and that states

82. Causation in Polybius: Pédech 1964: esp. 80–88; Pédech 1969: xxiv, with Eckstein 1989: 1–2.

with conflicts of interest were thus reduced to self-help measures of the most direct kind. The result was constant interstate violence.⁸³

Since this analysis of the impact of the absence of international law or mechanisms to enforce it occurs quite early in Polybius's *Histories* (in the fifth volume of an eventual forty-volume work), it follows that Polybius arrived at his grim conclusions about the nature of Hellenistic interstate relations while still a relatively young man. And this makes sense. He came from the ruling stratum of the Achaean League: a federal state, but one of only middling size that had to make its way amid great local violence while seeking to exist—and of course to expand—in an environment dominated by larger powers (first Macedon, later Rome). He had as teachers men with long experience in Achaean and interstate politics, and he himself was a practicing politician and elected official who had had to confront personally the problem of the pressure of larger powers upon the smaller Achaean polity.⁸⁴

Polybius gives other examples where the absence of international law in the Hellenistic world, and/or the absence of mechanisms to enforce it, is pointed out to the audience. Thus the obligations of a sworn treaty of alliance did not keep King Philip V of Macedon from being seriously tempted to make a surprise attack upon his ally Messene in 215 (Polyb. 7.12: at the time he was deterred only by reasons of practical *Realpolitik*), nor did it keep him from actually making the attack in 214 (3.19.11), nor did similar treaty obligations deter King Nabis of Sparta from making such a surprise attack on Messene in 202/201 (16.13.3), nor did the obligations of a peace treaty stop Antiochus III from attacking Ptolemaic Egypt in 202 (15.23.13), nor did similar obligations deter King Antiochus IV from attacking Ptolemaic Egypt in 169/168 (29.26).⁸⁵ In depicting the deliberations of his own Achaean political faction in 170 concerning

83. The importance of this passage for understanding Polybius's grim view of interstate relations: Wunderer 1927: 46; cf. Eckstein 1995: 195–96. On the absence of an effective enforcement mechanism for the few informal norms of state behavior in antiquity, see esp. Badian 1983: 401–5 (though without reference to this passage). Note that a similar observation on the lack of an enforcement mechanism appears, from a Roman perspective, at Vell. Pat. 2.50.3 (in this case, discussing the failure of an attempt at mediation). Cf. also Cic. *Sest.* 92 on the violent impact of the lack of effective institutions of law (discussed above, chap. 2, text at n. 6).

84. See Eckstein 1995: 1–16 and 197–210. On Achaean expansionism (which receives a hearty Polybian endorsement), see Polyb. 2.37.8 and 40.1–2, and 18.13.9; cf. Plut. *Arat.* 24.4 (all discussed in chap. 6 below).

85. Philip's temptation in 215: Walbank 1940: 36–37 and 73–75; cf. Eckstein 1995: 89–90. Nabis's treaty with Messene: Walbank 1967: 516. Antiochus III: see below. Antiochus IV: Eckstein 1995: 110–11.

what policy to pursue regarding Rome's war against King Perseus of Macedon (the Third Macedonian War), Polybius—an eyewitness to the meeting—never mentions as a factor in deliberations the existing treaty of alliance between the Achaean League and Rome, which bound the Achaeans by solemn oath to the gods to support Rome in such a war; on the contrary, he depicts discussion of whether to support Rome as concerned solely with what would be the most pragmatically advantageous stance. That is, the existence of a treaty is irrelevant (28.6). In this same period (and we are now almost fifty years beyond his description in book 5 of the opening of the Fourth Syrian War in 217), Polybius describes the surprise attack made by the Cretan city-state of Cydonia upon the city-state of Apollonia—an attack made despite the fact that the Apollonians enjoyed joint citizenship (*sympoliteia*) with the Cydonians on the basis of a sworn treaty (28.14.4–5). The Cydonians destroyed Apollonia totally: they killed all the men, divided up all the property, and seized the women and children for themselves (28.14.4). They were never punished—although Cydonia did eventually come under a threat to its own existence from the larger city-state of Gortyn (28.15).⁸⁶

What held (or rather, did not hold) for solemnly sworn treaties naturally held—or rather, did not hold—for informal norms of interstate conduct. Polybius condemns Philip V for habitually pillaging sacred sites that were supposed to be immune from violence—at Thermum in Aetolia, at Athens, at Pergamum. But he knows there was no way for Philip ever to be brought to account for his actions, except in Polybius's written work half a century later. And the same held true even for small polities that committed great crimes, such as Cydonia (see above).⁸⁷ Similarly, Polybius condemns Philip's enslavements in 202 of Greek populations who had surrendered to him peacefully, but he knows that the only response at the time to Philip's multiple violations of this norm of Hellenistic interstate conduct was an upsurge in the king's unpopularity (15.22–23). This certainly presented Philip with something of a political problem, and to some extent such expectations of unpopularity might have acted as a restraint on conduct; but that is hardly the same as the rule of law. Thus Philip's brutal actions did predispose the Rhodians to view him as an enemy (15.22.5–23.6)—but the Rhodians took no practical steps

86. On this incident, see Walbank 1979: 348–49.

87. Polybius's condemnation of Philip's behavior (15.21–24) and of the Cydonians (28.14–15); see Eckstein 1995: 24–25, 88–90, and 110. A parallel: the sack of the great Etruscan religious shrine at Pyrgi by Dionysius I of Syracuse in 384 (Diod. 15.14.3; Strabo 5.226).

against him at the time. Thus unpopularity in certain quarters was a problem that Philip was prepared to live with, compensated for by the great financial advantages accruing to Macedon from the selling of the Cians and Thasians into slavery.⁸⁸ Similarly, the Achaean statesman Aratus of Sicyon was a great hero to Polybius, but the historian surely knew (though he forbore to mention it) that Aratus, in his campaign against the tyrants of Argos, hideously violated the Greek interstate norm of allowing safe passage for athletes on their way to Panhellenic festivals—instead seizing and selling into slavery all athletes caught on their way to the Nemea festival held near Argos. No institutions existed to prevent Aratus from doing what he thought to be in the interests of Achaean power; and he suffered no punishment, either in Achaean internal politics or in the wider world, for this outrageous action (Plut. *Arat.* 28.4).⁸⁹

Just as we have noted above the widespread devastation caused by the wars among the monarchies, so Polybius himself stresses the suffering in the Peloponnese generated by the militarized competition system that existed among the small states there, “their spears never at rest” (5.106.4: a quote from Euripides, from the fifth century). At 2.62.3 the historian draws a similarly grim picture of incessant Peloponnesian warfare, political chaos, and physical destruction in the third century. Polybius even thinks that the constituent states of the Achaean League were ready under certain conditions to war against each other: he reveals (2.41.9) their mutual violence as soon as the league was temporarily broken up by the Macedonian kings in the late fourth century.⁹⁰ Yet Polybius stressed that this militarized competition system and its negative impact existed despite what he thought the natural disposition of the Peloponnesians to a peaceful and civilized life (5.106.3–5); it was the system of ferocious competition that was at fault. Similarly, when the Macedonians of the once unified Antigonid kingdom were divided up by Rome into four republics in the 160s, these small states also immediately began to quar-

88. The Rhodians, although greatly upset over Philip’s mass enslavement of the citizens of Cius, did nothing against him until he began interfering with specific Rhodian interests during his campaign in the southeastern Aegean the next year, in 201; only then did they declare war on him. Discussion: see now Wiemer 2002: 198–206. Unpopularity rarely deters leaders from acting in what they perceive to be state interest, as we have recently seen with President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair with regard to Iraq.

89. Discussion: Walbank 1933: 60–61.

90. Cf. Alexander Hamilton’s comment that the American states, if independent from one another, would soon be at war: Rossiter 1962: 58. Consider, in this regard, Themistocles’ maxim that wars are fought “so that no man should become inferior to, or give way, before another” (Ael. *VH* 2.28).

rel, despite their common heritage (3.1.2.12). Not surprisingly, Polybius—like Thucydides before him—believes that interpolity conflict is primeval in origin, having existed continually from the creation of the first communities (see Polyb. 6.7.4).⁹¹

THE HELLENISTIC POWER-TRANSITION CRISIS AFTER 207 B.C.

Realist analysis, however, can afford us more than these general insights into the anarchic and militarized nature of Hellenistic interstate politics considered as a system. It can also provide us with a conceptual framework regarding the nature of the specific crisis the Hellenistic state-system underwent at the end of the third century B.C.—the crisis that led to major Roman diplomatic and then military intervention. It can also provide us with significant insights into the actions of states within the system as each reacted to the crisis. The crisis was caused by the failure of the empire of Ptolemaic Egypt to maintain its place within the unstable and informal balance of power that had emerged in the Greek Mediterranean around 280. A Realist analysis would argue that the Ptolemaic failure in turn set in motion systemic forces far beyond the ability of any single state to control. A broad view of events, the systemic forces involved, and their meaning from a theoretical perspective is given here so that the reader will understand one of the two main thrusts of this monograph: not just how the anarchic environment and its pressures contributed to the expansion of Roman power and influence in the western Mediterranean (below, chapters 5 and 6), but how a specific crisis within the state system in the Hellenistic East helped lead to the expansion of Roman power and influence there.

The failure of the Ptolemaic state derived from inherent regime weaknesses combined with a series of unfortunate contingent events. Late in the reign of Ptolemy IV (ca. 207), a massive indigenous rebellion erupted in Upper and Middle Egypt. Fighting was savage (Polyb. 14.12.4); the Ptolemaic government proved unable to suppress the rebellion. It resulted from the resentments provoked by Greek rule over a huge indigenous Egyptian population. Polybius also says that it was dangerous for

91. Polybius, who was interested in the decline of the Seleucid dynasty and who was a personal friend of King Demetrius I (ruled 162–150 B.C.), will also have known how, after the weakening of Seleucid power with Demetrius's death in 150, the city-states of northern Syria—previously held in check—immediately began fighting among themselves (see above, n. 51).

Ptolemy IV to arm and train large numbers of Egyptians for service in his army (5.107.1–3), though that measure had been forced on him by the severe military threat to Egypt posed by the Seleucids after about 220 B.C. Self-confident Egyptian veterans later formed the core of the rebel army (Polyb. 5.107.3). This difficult situation was then exacerbated by the premature death of Ptolemy IV himself in 204/203 and the accession to the throne of Ptolemy V—a child of six. The government fell into the hands of a succession of regents, none of whom had significant popularity even in Alexandria, the capital on the Mediterranean coast, let alone in the countryside. The result was chaos in Alexandria, riots, and the overturning of a succession of unstable governments by coup d'état. By 201, Ptolemaic control was restricted to chaotic Alexandria and the lower Nile Valley; meanwhile the rebels had officially declared one of their leaders the new pharaoh, in a traditional ceremony presided over by Egyptian priests. Worse still, the faltering of Ptolemaic power now began to attract military aggression from the two other great dynasties, each of which in this period was led by a vigorous and warlike king: Antiochus III of the Seleucids, Philip V of the Antigonids. The government in Alexandria was well aware of the danger; one of its first acts after the accession of the child Ptolemy was to send an embassy to Antiochus, urgently requesting that he abide by the sworn treaty of peace between the two states, which had existed since 217 (Polyb. 15.25.13). The embassy had no effect.⁹²

The collapse of Ptolemaic power led the Hellenistic state-system after 207 into what modern political scientists term a “power-transition crisis.” Such a crisis occurs when one of the major states that has hitherto been a mainstay of a balance of power no longer has the power to uphold its role in the structure, and its status, prestige, and privileges within the system are no longer matched by its actual capabilities. The situation carries the likelihood of violent adjustment in the interstate structure—in fact the danger of systemwide war, “hegemonic war,” which results in the creation of a new structure with new states as leaders, a new structure more in accord with the real power capabilities of states within the system, and their real distribution across it.⁹³

The premier modern example of a power-transition crisis and its dan-

92. On the massive indigenous rebellion in Upper and Middle Egypt, see Pestman 1956 and Pestman 1995. On chaos and riots in Alexandria and the instability of the governments there following the death of Ptolemy IV, see now Mittag 2003: 168–72.

93. On power-transition theory in Realist theory, and on periods of power transition as fraught with danger and violence in any international system: above, chap. 2, text at n. 48. On hegemonic war, see Gilpin 1988.

gers for hegemonic war is the decline of the Austro-Hungarian empire after 1903, which eventually precipitated World War I.⁹⁴ The collapse of the Ptolemies was deeper and more sudden than the decline of the Habsburgs—but its importance and extent is often not appreciated in recent studies. Polybius, however, underlined to his audience its seriousness and the enormous interstate impact it had. He viewed the situation in Egypt and its empire after 203 as so important to the course of world developments that he devoted almost an entire volume of his *Histories* to an extended diachronic examination of the crisis in Egypt alone (14.11ff), thereby breaking dramatically—as he says (14.12.1–4)—with his usual literary-historical method of covering approximately simultaneous developments throughout the Mediterranean on a region-by-region basis. The discussion of the Egyptian crisis was very lengthy (48 quarto pages)—unfortunately almost all lost.⁹⁵

By 201 it was clear that something—some new structure of great states—was going to replace the previously existing tripolar balance of power in the East. Such a fundamental shift in structure was already being accompanied throughout the eastern Mediterranean by the systemwide violence characteristic of this type of crisis, and the violence of the situation was exacerbated by the fact that all major states in the Hellenistic anarchy were warlike and expansionist. The only question was what would replace the old tripartite system of balance of power. By 201–200 it appeared that the old structure would be replaced by a tremendous expansion in the power of two already formidable Greek states—Antigonid Macedon and the Seleucid empire—or perhaps even that one of these two formidable powers would emerge the sole victor. The result, in other words, might be the creation of a fundamentally bipolar system, with Antigonid and Seleucid power now predominant in the East. Or ultimately it might lead to the creation of a true unipolar system, after a second sequence of hegemonic war, with either Macedon or the Seleucids the completely dominant power.⁹⁶ Things turned out differently, of course: the transition crisis that began in the Greek East around 207 resulted in the expansion in power and influence of an already formidable non-Greek state on the periphery of the Greek world—

94. For an account of the July Crisis of 1914 within the framework provided by power-transition theory, see conveniently Stevenson 1997a: esp. chap. 5.

95. On the Egyptian focus of book 14: Walbank 1967: 414 and 434–35; Walbank 1985: 319 and n. 58.

96. Philip's campaign in western Asia Minor in 201 can be interpreted as aimed not merely at the Ptolemies, though that is true enough, but perhaps already as contemplating

namely Rome. But that the previous balance would be replaced by a radically new structure was inherent in the Ptolemaic collapse. It was possible for individual leaders of vision to influence the dramatic change that was occurring, which involved crucial decisions and choices by states—that is, to influence its direction. By 201, however, it was not possible to halt the change.

The systemwide crisis caused by the Ptolemaic collapse was made unavoidably public between summer 202 and summer 201 by major military actions taken by Philip V and Antiochus III against the tottering Ptolemaic realm (Polyb. 14.1a: explicit). As we have seen, the Hellenistic international system was a system prone to warfare as the natural means for states to handle conflicts of interest, and thus all Hellenistic states tended to regress toward militarized Waltzian functional similarity. In that sense, the aggressive military actions of Philip and Antiochus were predictable system-level responses to the power-transition crisis. Deepening Ptolemaic weakness, in other words, presented an opportunity in a highly competitive environment that few regimes would not have exploited in order to gain, via violence, greatly enhanced territory, resources, influence, and power.

But Realist theorizing can take us further even than this. It is clear that the intentions of Hellenistic states in the crisis at the end of the third century B.C. were not all identical. Some states, primarily those of middle rank but now including the Ptolemaic regime in Alexandria, were relatively satisfied with the current triadic balance of power among the great Greek states—indeed, from one perspective they clearly were desperate to maintain the basic political status quo in the East. That is, they were desperate to maintain both the current systemic multipolarity and their own relatively comfortable places within that multipolar system. The list of states deeply concerned over the violent threat arising from the conduct of Philip V and Antiochus III—states worried enough to take strong action—includes the Ptolemaic regime at Alexandria, of course, but also the Republic of Rhodes, the Kingdom of Pergamum, and even democratic Athens, a state that for the previous thirty years had pursued a policy of strict neutrality toward all the Hellenistic great powers. Four of these states were at war with either Philip or Antiochus by 201–200. It is prob-

an ultimate contest with Antiochus by building up possessions in Asia: see Adams 1993: 49. This remains a possible interpretation of Philip's general moves even though we now know that Philip was cooperating with Antiochus against the Ptolemies in 201 to the point of turning over to Antiochus certain towns he had conquered from the Ptolemies: see Blumel 2000; Wiemer 2001; Dreyer 2002.

able that the Aetolian League also sent an embassy of complaint to Rome about royal aggression during these years. The first four of these states certainly sent such embassies to Rome in 201–200, urging the Republic to come to their rescue—and to the rescue of the entire Hellenistic state-system—against the depredations of the two kings. That was certainly a bold act—as the undertaking of war against Philip and/or Antiochus was a bold act. But the behavior of the Ptolemaic regime, the Rhodians, the Pergamenes, and the Athenians in this crisis aimed (as best it could) at the basic preservation of the current geopolitical system.⁹⁷

An important strand within modern Realist thought indeed posits that in the analysis of international relations it is useful to divide states into the two basic categories of “status-quo states” and “revisionist states.”⁹⁸ Status-quo states are those that are satisfied with the existing principles, and the distribution of resources and prestige, of the international system. But Realists also point out that from another perspective, it would be rare to find a pure status-quo state under an international anarchy; the pressures to garner resources for oneself and to deny them to others under such a regime are so severe that almost every state is, under the right circumstances, at least somewhat revisionist in its own favor, hoping to gain more security.⁹⁹ Thus it would be incorrect to suggest that in the late third century Rhodes, Pergamum, Athens, and the Ptolemies were fundamentally status-quo states. No ancient Mediterranean state was. Rhodes and Pergamum eventually gained significant territory and resources from the alliance they struck with Rome in 200—as their governments wished (Polyb. 2.1.18–24; explicit). Athens, too, eventually benefited territorially from siding with Rome, as its government wished; be-

97. On the four embassies of 201–200, see Warrior 1996: 43–51 and 97–100. The Aetolian League: a tradition held that they sent envoys on a similar mission of complaint to Rome in this period (Livy 31.29.4, cf. App. *Mac.* 4). The historicity of this embassy is disputed: see Badian 1958: 211 (denying it), vs. Dorey 1960: 9, and Walbank 1967: 530–31 (defending historicity). If true, the story means that five Greek states came to Rome in 202–200 to complain about the aggressions of the kings. The evidence for the Aetolian embassy to Rome against Philip V is stronger than previously understood; there appears to be a reference to that embassy in Plautus’s play *Stichus*, produced at Rome in 200: lines 494–504 have a character complaining that ambassadors from Ambracia—a city in the Aetolian League—are taking up the attention of the Roman aristocracy and diverting them from economic problems in Italy. But this requires detailed discussion in another venue.

98. Original distinction is apparently by Carr 1939; strongly reiterated now by Schweller 1994, Schweller 1996, and Schweller 1998.

99. See Wolfers 1962: 84–86 and 125; Aron 1973: 75; Glaser 1992: 501 and n. 4; Taliaferro 2000: 129. A convincing historical example of how this principle can lead to expansion: Hyam 1999: 31–32.

fore that, it gained in influence (for instance, at Delphi). Indeed, even though greatly reduced now in power, Athens was still not averse in this period to territorial aggression against its neighbors.¹⁰⁰

The Ptolemaic regime did not gain territorially from the Roman connection in 200 or later; the Romans could not prevent the loss of Ptolemaic Coele Syria to Antiochus's assault, nor the loss of many territorial holdings in Asia Minor and the Aegean. The Ptolemaic state did, however, survive. Survival was achieved partly through self-help—unexpectedly effective efforts, both diplomatic and on the battlefield, after mid-201. But survival was also achieved because Rome intervened diplomatically to dissuade Antiochus III from any Seleucid invasion of Egypt, while transforming the balance of military power in the East against Antiochus and against Philip V.¹⁰¹ Without that shift the Ptolemies would most likely have eventually been destroyed. Even with that shift, the danger of destruction remained present: there was a serious attempt at a coup d'état against Ptolemy V in 197/196 B.C. by the Aetolian mercenary general Scopas (Ptolemy in that year was still only 13 years old), and in 196 Antiochus III, upon hearing false rumors of Ptolemy's death, sailed with his war fleet for Alexandria, intending to take over the entire country. These later incidents demonstrate both the depth of the crisis facing the Ptolemies from 207 and especially after 203, and the continuing fragility of the regime even with significant Roman support.¹⁰²

What, then, is the best way to conceive of the actions of Egypt, Pergamum, Rhodes, and Athens (and probably Aetolia) in the power-transition crisis after 203? Probably the best way to conceive of the actions of these states in the crisis is that under those conditions they acted to prevent the destruction of a fundamentally satisfactory balance of power, while simultaneously remaining eager for moderate favorable revisionism in each of their own cases.

Beyond this categorization of states along a spectrum from status-quo to revisionist, there has also evolved a taxonomy of the causes of revisionist states' conduct. Revisionism occasionally emerges simply because

100. See Habicht 1997: 203–4, 210–11, 217, 264–69. Polybius criticizes ruthless Athenian eagerness for territory: 30.20.1–8.

101. Detailed discussion below, chap. 7.

102. The attempted coup by the Aetolian mercenary general Scopas: Polyb. 18.53, with Walbank 1967: 623–24. Antiochus III's projected descent with his war fleet on Alexandria in 196, and his confidence that this would lead to his proclamation as king of Egypt: Livy 33.41, cf. App. Syr. 4. Polybian derivation of this material: Briscoe 1973: 320–21 and 325–26. In 170–168 Antiochus's son Antiochus IV conquered Lower Egypt and besieged Alexandria; he was driven off only by stern Roman diplomacy.

changes in the distribution of resources and/or prestige within the system have not kept pace with actual shifts in the distribution of power and capabilities. This first type of revisionism would be a product of the shifting dynamics of the international system, and its result would be a series of adjustments in the existing system—not its overthrow.¹⁰³ Pergamum, Rhodes, and Athens (see above), and perhaps even Rome itself (though this is controversial), fit into this category. More familiar to most scholars of ancient history is a second type of revisionism, generated by special aggression—an intense non-security-driven desire for expansion. Some of the Hellenistic monarchical regimes appear to be of this type, depending upon the capacities of individual rulers.¹⁰⁴

Thus modern students of international politics distinguish among intensities of revisionism. A basically status-quo but opportunistic and security-driven expander will be satisfied with relatively small adjustments in the system; this is sometimes called “orthodox revisionism.” Some revisionist states will be satisfied with adjustments of a large and favorable but nevertheless limited type—adjustments larger than would satisfy a basically status-quo but opportunistic and security-driven expander, but still not large enough to overthrow the system. Theorists term states of this second sort “limited revisionist states.” But the kind of state that is most threatening to any existing international system is one whose appetites for revision are so intense that they have no upward limit except the destruction of the existing system and its replacement by their own universal rule over the system area. Political scientists term states that fall into this third category of behavior “unlimited revisionist states” (i.e., true revolutionary states).¹⁰⁵

Under the above taxonomy it is clear that the regimes headed by Philip V and Antiochus III, as they conducted themselves after winter 203/202 as Ptolemaic Egypt collapsed, fall into the category of unlimited revisionist (revolutionary) states. The view of the world adopted by the governments of Macedon and the Seleucid empire was therefore quite different from the view of the medium-sized powers and the government at

103. See Glaser 1992: 501–5; cf. Wolfers 1962: 84–86.

104. See text above at n. 30. Non-security-driven expansion is expansion originating in a state's desire to increase its wealth, territory, or prestige when such expansion is unnecessary for increasing a state's security: see Glaser 1992: 501.

105. On this threefold view of intensity of revisionist impulse, the basic text is Buzan 1983/1991: 305–11. Cf. also Glaser 1992: 501–5; Evans and Newnham 1998: 480–81. On revolutionary states: Kissinger 1957; cf. Schweller 1998: 5.

Alexandria. Antiochus III had been even more successful as Seleucid king since 223 in enhancing the resources, capabilities, and prestige of his dynastic realm than Philip V had been in his similar project since 221 for the Antigonids. Both of these kings were vigorous rulers who went to war every year to expand their power, and both were world-famous generals in an age that had already produced Hannibal and P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus. Both Antiochus and Philip consciously modeled themselves on Alexander the Great, and according to Polybius both men—aware of their superior personal qualities—yearned to be universal emperors like Alexander, to achieve what Polybius calls “dominion over the entire world” (ἡ τῶν ὅλων δυναστεία, 5.102.1). Polybius indicates that Antiochus in this period saw himself as the heir of universal empire (11.39.13–16); and we can see this ideology reflected in Seleucid propaganda itself, where from circa 204 and his return from his eastern conquests, Antiochus is celebrated as *Μέγας*, “the Great,” and where we find the expansion of his rule westward over the Taurus all the way to the Aegean being celebrated on an inscription from the Ionian subject-city of Teos from 203.¹⁰⁶ Polybius makes the same claim for ambition to universal rule regarding Philip V in this period (5.101–2; cf. 5.104.7 and 108.5). Polybius’s claim about the scale of Philip’s ambitions has recently been dismissed as “exorbitant” by one prominent scholar;¹⁰⁷ yet (as with Polybius’s claim about Antiochus), it finds strong support in contemporary evidence, in this case a poem of Alcaeus of Messene:

Build higher the walls of Olympus, O Zeus, for Philip
Can scale everything! Close the bronze gates of the Blessed Ones.
Earth and sea lie subdued beneath Philip’s scepter:
All that remains is the road to Olympus.¹⁰⁸

There can thus be no doubt about the scale of the ambitions of these two kings. But most important, both men appeared linked after 203/202 in a coordinated attempt to destroy the Hellenistic system of balance of power that had endured since around 280 B.C.—by taking advantage

106. On the literary and inscriptional evidence for Antiochus Megas, see Ma 2002: 272–76. The Teos inscription: see Austin 1981: 253 (no. 151, lines 9–11) = Ma 2002: 308–11 (no. 17). Date: Ma 2002: 260–66.

107. Derow 2003: 54.

108. *Anth. Pal.* 9.518; on the political understanding of this poem, and other evidence for the scale of Philip’s ambitions in general, see now Walbank 1993. Walbank here departs from his previous view of Hellenistic politics as more or less orderly and restrained: see esp. 128 and n. 2 (specifically against Klose 1982).

of the sudden collapse of the Ptolemaic realm, plundering it of wealthy territories, and perhaps destroying it altogether. The result was the worst systemic crisis in the eastern Mediterranean in almost eighty years.¹⁰⁹

It is possible for an international system to survive the emergence of an unlimited revisionist state: the European state-system did so, at enormous cost, with Napoleonic France and again 130 years later (at even more enormous cost) with Hitlerite Germany.¹¹⁰ But the Hellenistic system of the late third century did not have the constellation of capabilities in the eastern Mediterranean to restrain or defeat Philip and Antiochus. If the warfare that convulsed the region after winter 203/202 had been limited to Greek states, it is probable that the entire system would have been destroyed by the two kings.

The Ptolemaic regime itself was unlikely to put up an effective self-defense for long: it was on the point of military and political collapse, with a child on the throne, continual and violent political instability in the capital of Alexandria, and a massive native rebellion in Upper and Middle Egypt against Greek rule—complete with the proclamation of an indigenous pharaoh. Its inability to maintain its traditional position as one of the three great Greek powers after roughly 207 was, indeed, the central factor at the system level in bringing on crisis in the Greek Mediterranean (as Polybius realized, and stressed to his audience). And although the regime managed a strong counteroffensive in 200 against Antiochus's invasion of Coele Syria and Judaea, this ended in disaster at the battle of Panium (late summer 200), after which Antiochus advanced all the way to Gaza and the boundaries of Egypt itself.¹¹¹

The situation regarding other potential Greek balancers of Philip and Antiochus was not much better. In European Greece the Achaean League was actually an ally of Philip, the Aetolian League a defeated opponent, and no individual city-state could stand up to the power of the Macedonian king. As counterweights that left only the Republic of Rhodes and the Kingdom of Pergamum, on the west coast of Asia Minor. But these were only midlevel powers—and they were also traditional and bitter rivals. Only the extraordinarily threatening situation as it had de-

109. Cf. Mommsen 1903: 606–701.

110. The France of Napoleon as an unlimited revisionist state (“revolutionary,” in terms of the state-system): Kissinger 1957. The Germany of Hitler as an unlimited revisionist state: Schweller 1998.

111. On the campaigns of 202–200 and the battle of Panium, see Bar-Kochva 1976: 146–57.

veloped by 201 led to a fragile Rhodian-Pergamene rapprochement. The striking of an alliance between these bitter rivals is more evidence of the seriousness of the systemic crisis; normally, regional rivalries such as the one between Pergamum and Rhodes, with their intense local concerns, constitute an important block to the creation of balancing alliances.¹¹² But even in combination these two uneasy allies had great trouble militarily containing just Philip alone.¹¹³

From this perspective, the embassies of the four (or five) states to Rome in 201–200 were thus acts of desperation. The topic of the Greek embassies and the subsequent Roman decision will be discussed in detail below in chapter 7, but two points may be made here. First, the Greek polities turned to Rome for aid because in the conditions of 201–200 Rome was for them, in the words of political scientist Stephen Walt, “the least threatening great power” (if only because of Rome’s geographical distance from the Aegean) in the face of the actions of more threatening and nearer great powers. For theorists of the conduct of states under anarchy, the conduct of the Greek states in 201–200 thus provides a classic confirming example for the hypothesis on alliance formation suggested by Walt.¹¹⁴ And second, the actions of the Greek polities in 201–200 form a classic example of what Geir Lundestad, an eminent historian of diplomatic relations after 1945, has called “empire by invitation”: the knowing request by relatively weak states, in the face of perceived direct threats to their existence, for the patronage of a much stronger state. For its own geopolitical reasons the stronger state often gives a positive answer to the call for help; but the call is instigated by others, for their own geopolitical reasons, and knowing the possible consequences of the request.¹¹⁵ This suggests that the events of 201–200, when taken as a whole, and as

112. See Wohlforth 2002: 103: “The systemic imperative may need to reach extremes in order to overwhelm local considerations.”

113. On persistent Rhodian-Pergamene rivalry in the third century, see Berthold 1984: chaps. 4 and 5; cf. McShane 1964: 96–97 and 117. On the striking of the Pergamene-Rhodian military alliance in 201, and the course of the fighting against Philip, see now Wiemer 2002: 179–208. The severe pressure upon Rhodes caused by the war against Philip is apparent from the fact that by late summer 200 the Rhodian government—even while appealing to Rome for military help—was seriously considering an Achaean offer to mediate the war.

114. On “balance of threat” theory (as opposed to more simple balance of power theory), and for the hypothesis that states in danger turn to the least threatening great power in order to form alliances, see Walt 1987: chaps. 1, 2, and 8.

115. Lundestad 1986: 263–77, and Lundestad 1990: 54–62. See also Doyle 1986: 162–97, cf. 25–26. Lundestad’s example is the European—not American—initiative in the formation of the NATO alliance.

crucial as they proved to be for the particular historical development of the ancient Mediterranean, were also typical events provoked by a systemic crisis occurring in an anarchic interstate structure.

The Roman Republic responded to the calls of the Greeks for help, and here we find Polybius again stressing, as with the absence of international law, the impact of the international system. For on the level of events in the physical world, according to Polybius—as opposed to Tyche (Fortune), who hated the kings’ unjust conduct against a child (15.20)—the great geopolitical problem for Philip and Antiochus in 201–200 lay in the fact that, although they did not realize it, by 201–200 the Hellenistic state-system was no longer limited to the eastern Mediterranean. Indeed, Polybius asserts at the beginning of his *Histories* that the great phenomenon of the period he is covering (264–146 B.C.) was the development of “interconnection” (συμπλοκή) between the eastern and western halves of the Mediterranean—the creation of a Mediterranean geopolitical whole (1.3.3 and 1.4.11). And he is precise about the date when this interconnectedness began to emerge: the third year of the 140th Olympiad (i.e., 217 B.C.: 4.28.3–4). It was Philip V’s decision in 217 to turn to the west, against a Rome weakened by defeats in the Hannibalic War (5.101–8), that drew sustained and negative Roman attention to the great powers of the Greek East. Philip’s decision and the Roman reaction to it thus forged new connections between the political situations in the eastern and western Mediterranean.¹¹⁶

According to Polybius, this was a development of world-historical importance. Previously there had been “contacts” between the eastern and western Mediterranean (cf. 2.12.13: ἐπιπλοκή), but no deep or continual involvement. Thus important political-military events occurring in the East had little or no impact upon the West, and vice versa. If states, as Hedley Bull and Alan Watson say, comprise a system together when “the behavior of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of others,”¹¹⁷ then Polybius is saying that before 217 the eastern Mediterranean constituted one regional state-system (or subsystem), and the West another, separate one. But after 217 the situation began to change: there was increased diplomatic traffic, including Greek complaints and warnings to Rome (especially about Philip V), and the Romans were increasingly ready to listen (5.105.4–8).¹¹⁸ Thus the newly emerging Mediterranean

116. Fundamental discussion in Walbank 1985.

117. Bull and Watson 1984: 1.

118. It is not clear which Greek embassies to Rome Polybius means—and analysis is hampered by the fact that we do not have Polybius’s full text for the years after 217. Pos-

symplokē forms a crucial and indeed fundamental explanation for why the four (or five) Greek states (including the Ptolemies) asked far-off Rome for aid in late 201 against the grave threats posed by Philip and Antiochus, as well as for why the Romans ultimately responded to the Greek requests positively and with military force. According to Polybius, by this point in time political-military events in the eastern and western Mediterranean had become—as he emphasizes in his introduction—“an organic whole” (σωματοειδῆ, 1.3.4). That is: the Mediterranean had come to form a single geopolitical system, and the behavior of states in the East had become a necessary factor in the calculations of states in the West, and vice versa.

Thus for Polybius a key to what occurred in the growing crisis after winter 203/202 was that the geopolitical horizons of Philip and Antiochus turned out to be too narrow. The kings focused exclusively on the dominance they intended and were in the process of achieving in the eastern Mediterranean—the region that was the traditional arena of action of the great Greek monarchies. But distance from the West no longer gave their actions insulation from Roman attention and concern. Greek diplomacy in 209–206 to mediate the first war between Philip and his allies on the one hand and Rome and Aetolia on the other (the war that modern historians of Rome call the First Macedonian War) shows that the kings were not the only Greek political leaders to miss the emerging *symplokē*; Greek diplomats in those mediations were little concerned with Rome but rather with making peace between Philip and Aetolia. The new, wider interconnection of political-military events was not at first easy to discern, and traditional diplomatic habits and focuses died hard.¹¹⁹ But Philip and Antiochus, as the major initiators of the systemic crisis of 202–200, bear a crucial responsibility for what now occurred; the Roman military intervention in the East. The *symplokē* had come into its own (Polyb. 15.20: explicit).

This, of course, is a system-level analysis. Indeed, it is striking how the situation that Polybius calls the emerging *συμπλοκή*—in which political-military events in the eastern and western halves of the Mediterranean, once separate, have become *σωματοειδῆ*—lends itself to the terminology of modern international-relations theory. We have just seen how Polybius's

sibly he means the Aetolians in 210–209; perhaps he is even thinking of the Greek embassies of 201. See Walbank 1957: 629–30; cf. Champion 1997: 120.

119. For the Greek perception that this war was primarily between Philip and Aetolia, see Eckstein 2002.

view connects to that of Bull and Watson on the definition of state-systems. But it can also be put in the terminology of Barry Buzan: Philip and Antiochus failed to take into account “the increased interaction capacity” between what had been, up until 217, two separate “regional subsystems” of states (the eastern and the western Mediterranean). This increased interaction capacity of the period after 217 meant that the two regional subsystems were now—as Buzan argues will periodically occur in international political history—merging into a single large system.¹²⁰

CONCLUSION

The Hellenistic world of states—Polybius’s world—was a far cry from the stable and consensual community of states living under a strong ethos of restraint on state behavior envisioned by Treves, Klose, Will and (now) Bederman. Rather, Polybius was all too aware that Thucydides’ general rule of international politics under a system of anarchy was valid for his own time as well: the strong do as they wish, the weak suffer what they must (Thuc. 5.89). We have seen in this chapter that ferocious competition and warfare were pervasive in the Hellenistic eastern Mediterranean, at all levels of size of states and with regard to all political types of states (monarchies, oligarchies, democracies, federal leagues). We have also seen that the primitiveness of interstate diplomatic procedures—underlined in our study of the Classical period—continued. And all this created a synergy with cultures of honor, courage, and status (itself partly a response to the pressures of the harsh environment) that made compromise between states in conflict very difficult.

This was the militarized and grimly competitive system of interstate politics—the system of brutal self-help—that all Hellenistic Greek polities confronted. Polybius understood it—and, like Thucydides, despaired of it (see 2.62.3; 5.67–68; 5.106.4–5). He provided a system-level answer for why Hellenistic interstate violence was so persistent, pervasive,

120. Buzan et al 1993: 66–80; cf. Aron 1973: 87–88, on the occasional unforeseeable “enlargement of the diplomatic field” to include major states not previously within a system. Polybius’s analysis parallel to modern systemic analysis: note too Mercer 1993: 163: “an integral part of a system is interconnectedness.” Mercer—a social-science-oriented historian of nineteenth- and twentieth-century diplomacy—was not reading Polybius when he wrote this. Little (in Buzan et al. 149) makes the point that the period after 220 saw the regional subsystems of the eastern and western Mediterranean coming together into a single system—but without reference to Polybius, who made the same point 2,150 years ago! This is another example of the lack of communication between political scientists and modern historians of antiquity.

and destructive: namely the lack of enforceable international law. He also provided a system-level answer for why the Roman Republic intervened in the Greek East in 200. Many factors were involved (and Polybius certainly underlines Roman aggressiveness), but the primary factor he stresses is at the systemic level: namely the collapse of Egypt, combined with the emerging *συμπλοκή* (interconnectedness) between political events in the eastern and western halves of the Mediterranean.

It is surely striking that our two most thoughtful ancient observers of international politics and war—Thucydides and Polybius—should end up emphasizing systemic explanations for the tragic and violent events they describe (though not to the exclusion of other causal factors). This suggests, I think, the enduring power of the Realist vision. This is not to say that Polybius was a modern political scientist. He was not—nor was he even as modern-seeming as Thucydides. This is shown by Polybius's constant and consistent employment of history as a fund of moral exemplars—human past actions—to be praised or blamed as a means of providing explicit moral instruction to his audience.¹²¹ It is shown even more by his frequent disquisitions and warnings concerning the impact of Fortune (Tyche)—sometimes seen as a conscious entity—on human affairs. So Polybius was a Hellenistic intellectual.¹²² But by pointing out the general Hellenistic situation of fierce interstate competition and war as a systemic problem, caused fundamentally by the absence of enforceable international law, and by giving what was primarily a system-level analysis for the most crucial international event he described in his *Histories*—the intervention of Rome in the Greek East—Polybius should gain a place among the ancient founders of the Realist approach to international relations.

121. See Eckstein 1995: esp. chaps. II–IV and IX.

122. Best discussion of Polybius and Tyche: Walbank 1957: 16–26; cf. also Walbank 1994: 25–40.

Terrores Multi

The Rivals of Rome for Power in Italy
and the Western Mediterranean

The governing elites of states learn about interstate relations from experience, which affects, informs, and limits their perceptions of the outside world and hence the decisions about it that they are subsequently likely to make.¹ Realist theoreticians argue, in addition, that the subtle pressures upon the culture and behavior of a state deriving from the interstate structure of which that state is a part are best observed over long stretches of time.² Hence the purpose of this chapter is to survey the societies that Rome confronted over the long term before her involvement with the crisis in the eastern Mediterranean state-system at the end of the third century B.C.: namely the competitors for power and security that the Romans discovered in their earliest history (seventh through fourth centuries B.C.); then as their own political horizon began to transcend the boundaries of Latium after 340 B.C.; and finally when that political horizon began to transcend Italy itself after 264 B.C.

The theme is that the societies with which Rome competed for power and security in this long period—power and security being of course integrally linked under conditions of interstate anarchy—were themselves

1. See Desch 1998: 142.

2. See the comments of Wohlforth 2001: 314.

very militaristic, warlike, and diplomatically aggressive. The point is not to deny the intense militarism of Rome itself (to be discussed in chapter 6), to excuse it, or to argue that Rome acted primarily defensively in its career of expansion. Rather, the thesis is that Roman expansion was not merely a matter of unilateral Roman aggression (though the Romans were certainly aggressive). It was also a matter of Rome bringing itself into—or being drawn into—ever larger preexisting, harshly anarchic state systems (from Latin to Etruscan, to central Italian, to Italian, to western Mediterranean, and then to pan-Mediterranean), and acting harshly—as other states were acting—in accord with the new demands posed by each system in turn.

Hence the militarism and bellicosity of Rome's competitors simply places Roman expansion within the long-term context of a series of war-prone interstate systems (existing within a generally war-prone structure of interstate relations throughout the Mediterranean world), populated with security-conscious, diplomatically aggressive, highly militarized and bellicose polities—of which Rome was one. In such a structure of interstate politics, and confronting such competitors, it was natural that serious and unregulated conflicts of interest would arise between communities, and that those conflicts were very often resolved, in the almost uniform absence of means of settling conflicts peaceably, by war. This was the experience of the Roman Republic before its serious involvement with the heavily militarized states of the Greek East.

One characteristic of the interstate environment apparent in this chapter is the tendency in the West for weaker states to call upon strong states to protect them in local quarrels and conflicts. This tendency was a prominent phenomenon in the eastern Mediterranean as well. Herodotus, the earliest surviving Greek historian, describes it in language that remained a constant for centuries (4.159.4 and 6.108.1): weaker states “put themselves into the hands” of the stronger for the sake of protection. And Thucydides, discussing fifth-century Greece, pointed to the danger such conduct by the secondary states posed: by involving the stronger states in local conflicts, it created clashes of interest between the larger powers themselves. But the tendency of weaker states to seek protection from the strong—called “empire by invitation” by the political scientist Geir Lundestad—is natural in an environment that provides little means of protection but power: either one's own power, or else the power of the powerful. It was an important element in the Classical anarchy, an important element in the Hellenistic anarchy, and an important element in

the interstate anarchy that reigned in the western Mediterranean. It remains an important element in international relations today.³

LATIUM AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Rome grew up within a world of rather similar city-states—"Tyrrenian Italy"—that stretched in western Italy from Arretium in northern Etruria, at the foot of the Apennine Mountains, down to Capua in Campania, far south of Rome. Scholars now think that in the period 700–400 B.C. the city-states of this region—Etruscan and Italic towns alike—underwent a common cultural and political development in which Rome participated, a development strongly influenced by the Greeks.⁴ One must stress that the Romans' violent experience of interstate anarchy dated from the earliest period of the city. Despite the recent thesis of Alan Watson, it is clear that this region in the eighth through the fifth centuries B.C. possessed no effective international law, or effective institutions whose purpose was the peaceful management and resolution of conflicts—even among the thirty culturally very similar polities of Latium proper. Rather, each Latin city was in a condition of Waltzian self-help.⁵ And as a consequence, war in archaic Latium was, as Paul Veyne says—and once more we think of the famous statement of Waltz—"une façon normale de vivre."⁶

True, there was the Latin League, which met annually in the Alban Hills to express via joint sacrifices to the gods an ethnic and cultural solidarity among the Latin towns; and this idea of kinship was important in the eventual creation of an integrated state in Latium.⁷ But the Latin League itself had no mechanisms to mediate conflicts, and in fact conflicts over status at the religious festival led to disputes between polities (Livy 32.1.9; 37.3.4). At the end of the sixth century a closer military-political alliance of Latin states headed by Tusculum and aimed at Rome did appear, but this league was soon defeated.⁸

3. Thucydides on how the appeal of Epidamnus to Corcyra and then the appeal of Corcyra to Athens led to an ever-widening conflict of states: above, chap. 3. On empire by invitation (Lundestad 1986: 263–77, and Lundestad 1990: chap. 1; cf. also Doyle 1986: 192–97, cf. 25–26), see above, chap. 4, text at n. 115.

4. Discussion: Cornell 1995: chap. 4.

5. Watson 1991; critique and grim counterhypothesis: Giovannini 1999: 45–48. General impact of anarchy: note that "warrior tombs" are as common in late eighth-century Latin Satricum as they are at Rome; see Cornell 1995: 82 and 84.

6. Veyne 1975: 808.

7. See below, chap. 7.

8. See Cornell 1995: 295–98; and chap. 7 below.

Diplomacy was primitive. As in Classical and Hellenistic Greece, there were no permanent ambassadorial missions to foreign states—to exchange information, lessen mutual opacity, and express early concerns about policies so as to head off possible crises. In the crises that thus inevitably developed, diplomacy consisted primarily of making demands on others in public: the *rerum repetitio* (rehearsal of grievances), made by special priests called *fetiales*. Possibly the *rerum repetitio* originated as a way by which the early Latin states sought to settle peaceably the consequences of frequent semiprivate plunder raids among them.⁹ But one should not be optimistic: the *rerum repetitio* constituted demands for reparation that could be satisfied by the other side by peaceful means, but nevertheless had to be satisfied or else war would result. It was the same sort of public diplomacy of compellence in contemporaneous widespread use among the Greek states. And, as among the Greeks, it often had the same negative effects, initiating not a peace process but deadly “contests of resolve” between polities. Thus in the exemplar of the procedure provided us by Livy (1.32.5–14), the other side—out of a stern sense of injured honor—refuses to satisfy the grievances claimed by the Romans, and the result is war. Early Rome practiced the coercive *rerum repetitio*, but in doing so it was not different from its Latin neighbors.¹⁰

As among both the Classical and Hellenistic Greeks, the ideals of communitarian discourse maintained by modern Constructivist international-systems theorists once more have little relevance to the actual menacing realities of the interactions among these ancient Latin states. The common annual sacrifices of the Latins on the Alban Hills had a cultural importance, but the ancient tradition is insistent that early Latium was convulsed by conflicts and wars among these states.¹¹

Indeed, even scholars who support the thesis that Rome by the third century B.C. was an exceptionally bellicose and militaristic state not merely in modern terms but even among ancient polities tend to agree that down to the mid-fourth century Rome was not merely an ordinary city-state in terms of its institutions, but a not very successful city-state in terms of the achievement of even local security. These scholars un-

9. So Rich 1976: 58, and Rupke 1990: 97–99. The functions of the fetial priests: Kostial 1995: 40–52.

10. According to Livy, the *rerum repetitio* ritual was not originally Roman but Latin (1.32.5).

11. The traditional diplomacy of compellence among Greek states: above, chap. 3, text at n. 100 (Classical period); chap. 4, text at n. 78 (Hellenistic period). International-systems Constructivism: above, chap. 2, text at n. 79. Constant Latin interstate warfare: Sherwin-White 1980: 179.

derline that in the early stages of Roman history the city often came under severe military pressure from its near neighbors in Latium—as well as from Sabines in the hills to the east, from Etruscans north of the Tiber, and later the Aequi and the Volsci beyond the Latins in the hills to the south. An additional major threat emerged from about 390, with periodic invasions of central Italy by Celtic tribes from north of the Apennines in the Po Valley. Pillaging by all these enemies caused grave harm to the Roman homeland south of the Tiber and serious social dislocation among the farming classes that made up the heart of the city-state. Wars in the 340s were still being fought with neighbors thirty miles from the city.¹² The world facing the Romans held *terrores multi* (Livy 7.12.7: the situation in 358 B.C.); early and centuries-long experience of vulnerability to destructive military pressure from all sides clearly had an impact on the militarization of Roman society and culture, while simultaneously creating an attitude of suspicion and aggression toward the outside. Though Rome was the largest of the polities of Latium, the fact is that it had a difficult time merely surviving in its original environment.¹³

THE ETRUSCAN CITY-STATES

The main neighbors confronting Rome from the north were the polities of Etruria, and we turn now to a discussion of their political culture and military power. Calling the city-states from the Tiber north to the Apennine Mountains “the Etruscan cities” is done merely for geographical convenience. They were, indeed, Etruscan in language and/or culture, but this did not lead to concerted political-military actions: unity among these turbulent states proved difficult. Although we must proceed with caution because the political situation of the Etruscan polities is very imperfectly known, the little evidence we possess suggests that the Etruscan city-states existed in a quite Hobbesian world. It indicates that militarism, interstate rivalry, and diplomatic and military aggressiveness were as abundant north of the Tiber as in Latium. In other words, militarized anarchy was the common culture of Tyrrhenian Italy—as it was among the more famous city-states of Greece.

Within a multipolar state-system, the Etruscan polities engaged in fierce competition with each other for territory, security, and political

12. See Raaflaub 1996: 276; Raaflaub et al. 1992: 28.

13. Raaflaub 1996: 276–86 and 291–92 (with extensive bibliography); Rosenstein 1999: 196–200.

dominance. The details of their wars are mostly lost. But one result is clear from archaeology: in the period 750–500 B.C. every Etruscan city was sited in an almost impregnable natural position. Many cities depended on these strong natural defenses alone: the classic example is Veii, almost inaccessible on its cliffs (but with a fortified citadel); another example is Caere. Both cities were just north of Rome—giving an indication of conditions in the region. Other Etruscan towns (Rusellae, or Pyrgi the port of Veii) were heavily walled. By around 400 B.C. all were walled. Walls, earthworks, and fearsomely strong natural sites all bespeak a war-prone environment and a pervasive fear of attack.¹⁴ Archaeology also indicates that some Etruscan cities were destroyed in war by their neighbors: Acquarossa, south of Volsinii (sixth century); Murlo, probably destroyed by Clusium (late sixth century); Vetulonia, perhaps destroyed by its neighbor Rusellae (sixth century); Marsiliana and Saturnia, perhaps destroyed by Vulci (fifth century).¹⁵

To be sure, there was a league of twelve Etruscan city-states that met yearly at the shrine of the god Vultumna near Volsinii, but its function was mostly religious; it did not constitute a political authority or even a political association, let alone a military alliance. We know of no case where this religious association mediated conflicts between individual Etruscan states, and there was never an “Etruscan federal army.” We have one (dubious) story where the league declared war on Rome—whereas we have several stories of its refusal to help individual cities; and as in the Latin League, cooperation among member states was sometimes undermined by disputes between cities over status.¹⁶ Thus this league of Etruscan states was weaker in organization and function than even the Latin League south of the Tiber, and did little to ameliorate conditions in the anarchic Etruscan interstate system. This was because if loyalty to the league clashed with a state’s autonomous and self-seeking interests, those interests prevailed.¹⁷

14. The fortifications of Rusellae (seventh century): see Barker and Rasmussen 1998: 151 and 167. Pyrgi: Scullard 1967: 1–2. The large citadel of Veii: Scullard 104. Other examples: Marzabotto in the Po Valley and Regisvilla the port of Vulci (sixth century), Falerii Veteres (fifth century?), and Nepete (fifth century?): Barker and Rasmussen 1998: 158, 167, 305, and 314.

15. On these destroyed sites, see Colonna 1990: 7–21. On Acquarossa, see conveniently Barker and Rasmussen 1998: 100; on Murlo: *ibid.* 168; on Vetulonia, Scullard 1967: 140; Marsiliana and Saturnia: *ibid.* 125–26.

16. League action, or, far more often, inaction; Dion. Hal. 3.57, 8.18, 9.1 (of uncertain historicity); Livy 4.23.4–24.2, 4.25.7–8 and 3.1.6, 5.1.3–7 and 17.6–16. Disputes over status: Livy 5.1.3–4 (403 B.C.).

17. The judgment of Scullard 1967 235, and Oakley 1997: 402–4.

This anarchic situation naturally gave rise to a culture of militarism within the Etruscan states. Graves filled with weapons and armor are common north of the Tiber: for instance, at Vetulonia (sixth century), where we also find a grave stele with a ferocious incised warrior, dedicated to the memory of the prominent citizen Avele Feluske—outdone in ferocity, however, by the image on the grave stele commemorating Avele Tite at Volaterrae.¹⁸ Etruscan aristocrats gloried in success in war: hence the Tarquinian inscription honoring S [. . .] of Norchium for conquering a king of Caere (south of Tarquinii), defeating Arretium (to the north), and taking nine separate citadels in war (in Etruria or perhaps Latium). Another inscription from Tarquinii honors the general Velthur Spurinna for success against Caere and for leading an army into Sicily: the state awarded him a golden crown. These inscriptions actually date from the early Roman Imperial period and are in Latin, but are based on earlier monuments and tradition; they give us a taste of the Etruscan interstate world, and the military pride that was characteristic of the Etruscan aristocracy.¹⁹ Meanwhile, Caere—subjected to victorious attack in the above Tarquinian inscriptions—was itself famous among the Greeks for the bravery of its soldiers (Strabo 5.2.3). And Etruscan mercenaries were a significant element in both Greek and Carthaginian armies from the late fifth century down into the Hellenistic period.²⁰

The Etruscan cities were also famously powerful at sea. War fleets of various Etruscan coastal states ranged as far west as Corsica (Hdt. 1.166) and as far south as Campania. The Etruscans were also well known as pirates (Cic. *De Rep.* 2.9).²¹ But organized Etruscan military power at sea was brought to an end by the defeat of the combined fleets of several cities at the hands of Greek Cumae, aided by Carthaginian ships, in 474 B.C.

Etruscan culture had a taste for mass public execution of prisoners of war—as with the three hundred Roman prisoners ritually executed at Tarquinii in 358 B.C. (Livy 7.9–10). The rituals appear linked to an Etruscan custom of human sacrifice—which was evidently connected with the public display of the decapitated heads of enemies.²² Archaeologists have

18. See Scullard 1967: 138, 149, and plate 71.

19. On the Tarquinian inscriptions and their implications, see Cornell 1978: 167–73.

20. See Thuc. 6.103.2; Diod. 19.106.2; epigraphical evidence: Turfa 1986: 83 and nn. 167–68.

21. Discussion: de Souza 1999: 51–52.

22. See Bonfante 1984: 531–39, and Bonfante 1986: 262–63. She suggests that the Etruscans adopted the custom of displaying severed heads from the Celts (*ibid.*). Classical and Hellenistic Greeks also occasionally displayed the severed heads of enemies: see below, chap. 6 (with references).

also noted that while Etruscan painting often depicts scenes of luxury and ease, the depiction of extreme violence was also widespread. The most violent moments from Greek mythology appear in Etruscan art—along with images of strong animals devouring the weak. There is little in Greek or Roman art to compare, for instance, to the violence of the paintings of the François tombs at Vulci (fourth century), or to the work of the Etrusco-Corinthian Carnage Painter—who specialized in images of dead soldiers being decapitated by the victors.²³

The above discussion is not meant to be a depiction of Etruscan culture in its totality, any more than a discussion of Roman culture that rightly emphasizes its militarism would be a depiction of Roman culture in its totality. But it is clear that to north of the Tiber as to its south, we find a system of warlike and competitive city-states. The absence of international law, of interstate cooperation or strong institutions to foster it, and the existence instead of a harsh self-help environment—all were major factors in creating the warlike similarity of the Etruscan states. No doubt the culture of military achievement imbuing the aristocrats of the Etruscan cities (a culture itself in good part the result of the pressures of the anarchy) in turn made Etruscan decision-making processes war-prone, with elites (as in Greece) extremely sensitive to issues of interstate status and honor. One sometimes finds statements, based on the abundance of Etruscan luxury (a frequent theme in Etruscan art), that after the sixth century the Etruscan states became “decadent” and lacked “vigor.”²⁴ But warfare between Rome and individual Etruscan states lasted for more than two hundred years after the founding of the Republic. This is hardly an indication of the decadence of the polities north of the Tiber.

In those wars, sometimes the aggressor was Rome—but sometimes the aggressor was Etruscan. The Tarquin kings who ruled Rome for a hundred years before being overthrown around 509 B.C. were in origin Etruscan warlords; this may have predisposed the Roman elite to view the military power that lay north of the Tiber with suspicion (though it is also the case that Etruscans had long been accepted as part of the multiethnic population of the city).²⁵ In the chaos following the expulsion of the Tarquins, it is possible that another Etruscan warlord, Lars Por-

23. The François paintings (which evidently depict a historical incident): Cornell 1995: 134–38. For a general judgment on extreme violence in Etruscan art, see Barker and Rasmussen 1998: 255–57—with startling examples.

24. See, e.g., Last 1928: 558.

25. On the rule of the Tarquins in Rome, see Cornell 1995: 151–72.

senna of Clusium, captured Rome itself, and then used the city as his base for further conquests in Latium—until he was defeated by a coalition of Latin states led by Aristodemus the Greek tyrant of Cumae.²⁶

During the first century of the Republic one of Rome's main competitors for power was its neighbor the Etruscan city of Veii. Situated on almost impregnable cliffs, Veii commanded a territory as large and fertile as that of Rome, and Rome blocked its expansion as it blocked that of Rome. The result, under the prevailing interstate anarchy, was naturally a series of wars.²⁷

The first war, in the 480s and 470s, took place south of the Tiber over control of the city of Fidenae—which suggests that Veii was the aggressor. There was a major Roman disaster at the battle of the Cremera, and Veii appears to have won the war; that is the Roman tradition, and Roman writers were not in the habit of inventing Roman defeats.²⁸ Graeme Barker and Tom Rasmussen have recently declared that this war marked the last time an Etruscan city-state's army ever acquitted itself well on the battlefield.²⁹ The thesis fits with the traditional idea of Etruscan decadence after about 500, but frankly it does not fit with the Roman experience of the great military power of the Etruscan states, and gives a false picture of the Romans' environment.

Rome eventually overcame Veii: it took a century. A second war, in the 430s, is said to have begun with the murder of Roman envoys protesting Veientine actions, again at Fidenae (Livy 4.17.1–6). The envoys' statues still stood in the Forum at Rome in the first century A.D. (Cic. *Phil.* 9.2.4; Plin. *NH* 34.32), so it may be that these men were actually murdered. It seems a case of ancient compellence diplomacy provoking an unusually brutal reaction. The war ended in a Roman victory that destroyed Fidenae and secured the Tiber frontier against Veii.³⁰ A third war broke out around 400. Rome was perhaps the aggressor in this war, whose origins are unclear; the Senate certainly dealt brutally with the defeated Veientes. The entire territory of Veii was confiscated by Rome, and some of its rich farmland was distributed to Roman settlers (Livy 5.30.8; Diod. 14.102.4). Yet after 390, in the crisis following the sack of

26. See Dion. Hal. 7.3–11, a passage that reveals the kaleidoscopic complexity of the rivalries of the various states in Latium at this time. Roman tradition asserted, of course, that Porsenna was defeated in his attempt to seize the city. Discussion: Cornell 1995: 237.

27. See Scullard 1980: 97.

28. Discussion: Cornell 1995: 311.

29. Barker and Rasmussen 1998: 265.

30. See Cornell 1995: 311 (including accepting historicity of the story of the envoys' murder).

Rome itself by Celts from the north, many Veientes received Roman citizenship—perhaps not very willingly, but the action vastly improved their legal position.³¹

The conquest of Veii also demonstrated that the Tiber would no longer be Rome's northern frontier. Increased military capability led the Roman elite to desire a wider buffer zone to the north. Perhaps this was partly because by the 390s Rome had come under attack from new Etruscan enemies, states that lay beyond Veii: Tarquinii (Livy 5.16.2–6) and Volsinii (5.30.4–6). Roman tradition claimed that these new Etruscan attacks were fierce, coming whenever Rome appeared weakened and/or distracted (*ibid.*). The picture of Etruscan military power matches the tradition, likely to be true, that around 390 the army of Etruscan Caere defeated the same Gallic army that had defeated Rome and burnt the city.³² We see here a harshly competitive city-state world similar to the ruthless environment of Classical Greece.³³ The emergence of the new strategic enemies Tarquinii and Volsinii led to an aggressive Roman push forty miles north of the Tiber, to the next natural stopping place, the forested mountains of Monte Cimino around the towns of Sutrium and Nepet.

Livy describes Sutrium and Nepet as “the barriers against Etruria and the gateway to Rome,” a gateway that the Romans were concerned to defend (6.9.4, *tuendi*). That is, Livy thought of them “more as a barrier to stop the Etruscans marching south than as a gateway for the Romans to march north.”³⁴ Indeed, Livy's narrative shows a Sutrium–Nepet frontier under periodic severe pressure from Etruscan states, including severe attacks in the 380s and 370s. Sutrium changed hands several times, and the Sutrium–Nepet frontier remained so violent for so long that the phrase “to go to Sutrium” gained the meaning “to be ready for war” (Plaut. *Cas.* 524).

Although Livy's tradition stresses Roman anxiety about the Etruscan powers, and what he deems necessary measures to increase Roman security, no doubt the Tarquinian or Volsinian version of events would have asserted the same about Rome. And perhaps both sides would have been

31. On this war, see Cornell 1995: 311–12; cf. 320 on the extension of Roman citizenship to the Veientes after 390. Archaeology shows a more than two-thirds survival rate of farmsteads in the *ager Veientinus* spanning the period of the Roman conquest, suggesting that many farms remained in the hands of their original owners: see Potter 1979: 94–95.

32. See Diod. 14.117.7 and Strabo 5.2.3, accepted by Cornell 1995: 316.

33. See above, chap. 3.

34. Oakley 1997: 472.

right, for in a militarized anarchy such as the state-system existing in Tyrrhenian Italy in the fourth century B.C. every state seeks to expand its power, influence, and resources, and to limit those of others.³⁵

In 360 a new round of war began, with Caere, Tarquinii, and Falerii—according to Livy—on the offensive. Livy also says that in 358 they inflicted a major defeat on a Roman army, that the war went on for a decade, and that it ended with no territorial gain for either side. Roman historical tradition, which aims at glorifying the city, does not make up stories like this. Even Stephen Oakley, who is often ready to see the Romans as aggressors, agrees that since Rome was being hard pressed elsewhere in 360 by conflicts with both Latins and Gauls, it seems unlikely that it was the aggressor here. Rather, the Etruscan cities were probably taking advantage of Roman weakness (as Tarquinii and Volsinii are accused by Livy of doing a generation earlier) to seek to increase their power toward the south.³⁶ The Etruscans, according to Livy, were an important part of the *terrores multi* that Rome faced in this period (7.12.6–7).³⁷

The war of the 350s ended with a forty-year truce. At the end of it, in 311, Livy says that Tarquinii and Volsinii again attacked the Sutrium frontier, with significant success (9.32–33 and 9.35; cf. Diod. 20.35.5). This Etruscan attack occurred in the period after the dreadful Roman defeat by the Samnites at Lautulae, and even W. V. Harris, the foremost advocate of the thesis of exceptional Roman aggressiveness, thinks it likely that this war began at Etruscan initiative.³⁸ The Romans responded to the threat by scraping together forces under Q. Fabius Maximus Rullianus, who counterattacked in 310 and for the first time penetrated beyond Monte Cimino, into the rich farmlands of central Etruria. Fabius's successes north of Monte Cimino and the conclusion of thirty-year truces with several important Etruscan cities (Livy 9.37) finally relieved the pressure on the Sutrium frontier, and must have convinced the Senate that Roman control toward the north could be extended: hence the joy of the Senate's envoys at Fabius's victories (9.36.14).

The crisis of 311–308 could well have ended in Roman strategic defeat at the hands of aggressive Etruscan states. But the successes of Rome in this multifront war (Samnites to the south, Tarquinii and Volsinii to the north) exemplify the chief advantage that Rome was coming to possess

35. Cf., e.g., Wolfers 1962: 84–86; Glaser 1992: 501 and n. 4. See above, chap. 2.

36. Oakley 1998: 9–10. Harris (1971: 47–48) is more skeptical.

37. For similar sentiments about Etruscan power, see Livy 9.45.3, 10.4.1, and 13.5.

38. Harris 1971: 53 and 58. On the Roman defeat at Lautulae, see below, text at n.

in the interstate competition: not different and more aggressive intentions than its neighbors and competitors (though Rome was certainly militarized, militaristic, and aggressive) but an ability to mobilize superior resources of military manpower in the ferocious competition. That is a theme of fundamental importance to which we shall return.³⁹

In 302–293 key Etruscan city-states joined with Samnites, Celts, and Umbrians against Rome in the great War of Sentinum. The Etruscan military contribution to this war is sometimes downplayed by modern scholars.⁴⁰ But Etruscan forces in 302 defeated a large Roman army (Livy 10.3.6–7: “a shameful rout and slaughter”), and in 298 fought a Roman army to a bloody draw near Volaterrae (10.12.3–6). Livy depicts the Etruscans in general as still a serious threat in this period, capable in themselves or with their allies of causing great fear at Rome (*terror*: 10.4.1 and 13.5).

In the actual campaign of Sentinum in 295, Etruscan states played a crucial role in bringing together the Etruscan-Umbrian-Samnite-Gallic alliance. They constituted a strategic peril because of their position on the left flank of any Roman army advancing northwest to confront the Celts, Samnites, and Umbrians, but also because of their own military power. Nor did the great Roman victory at Sentinum in 295 immediately break their resistance. Perugia and Clusium had to be subdued by set-piece battle over the next year (Livy 10.30.1–2 and 31.3–4). There was hard fighting against Volsinii and Rusellae in 294, and against Etruscized Falerii, much closer to Rome, in 293 (Livy 10.45.4–8).

The Roman victory at Sentinum in 295 was nevertheless the strategic turning point. Before it, Etruscan forces were capable of invading Roman territory (and even in 293 the Faliscans could still do so); after it the Romans were continually on the offensive, expanding their dominance in central and northern Etruria. The Etruscan states are depicted on the defensive, standing siege behind the walls of their towns, and leaving the countryside to be devastated by Roman armies (cf. Livy 10.12.8).⁴¹

Yet to view these events merely within the framework of a war-prone dyadic relationship between Rome and the Etruscan cities—true though that is—would also be partly misleading. A major factor in the failure of the Etruscan cities to press Rome even harder than they did was the pressure they in turn were coming under from the Celtic tribes to their

39. See in detail chap. 7 below.

40. See, e.g., Scullard 1980: 137.

41. See Harris 1971: 78.

own north. That is, in the militarized anarchy of Tyrrhenian Italy the Etruscans—like Rome—faced threats on multiple fronts; and to the central and northern Etrurian states, Rome for a long time must not have seemed their major problem.⁴² Celtic warriors had taken the last of the Etruscan city-states of the Po Valley by around 350 B.C.⁴³ The evidence of increased Celtic pressure on the Etruscan cities to the south of the Apennines is clear: the Senone siege of Clusium in 392; funeral urns from Etruria depicting Etruscan soldiers fighting Celtic warriors with the aid of the Furies; the Etruscan fears of Celtic invasion attested by Livy (10.10.6–12); the Celtic invasion of Etruria in 299. Above all, there is the fact that when Rome finally became the hegemonic power in Etruria in the 280s, the Romans were immediately confronted by Celtic pressure—the intensity of which is shown by the destruction of L. Caecilius Metellus Denter's army mostly at the hands of Senones at Arretium in 284 or 283.⁴⁴

This Senone invasion of Etruria is linked somehow with new fighting against Rome by Vulci and Volsinii. The destruction of Metellus Denter's army was in part the work of Etruscan forces—not just Celts.⁴⁵ Volsinii continued to resist until 280; Vulci was punished by the confiscation of one-third of its territory, and in 273 the Latin colony of Cosa was established on that land. But the fact of defeat does not detract from the fact that the governing elites in Vulci and Volsinii had not given up the idea of militarily resisting Rome even in the 280s—though they were increasingly in the minority (cf. Livy 10.18.5). And there was more warfare in Etruria in the 270s (Livy *Per.* 13), including a war between Rome and Caere that resulted in the Roman confiscation of half of Caere's territory (Dio frg. 33).⁴⁶ Moreover, we have the extraordinary fact of a war between Rome and Falerii in 241 B.C.: a war fought with an Etruscanized city less than thirty miles from Rome in the year in which Rome defeated Carthage in the First Punic War, a war with Falerii that included

42. Rightly emphasized by de Sanctis 1916: 344; cf. Harris 1971: 59; Scullard 1980: 108.

43. On the fate of Etruscan Felsina and Marzabotto in the Po, see Scullard 1967: 219. Felsina was itself a heavily militarized culture—shown by the series of grave steles depicting Etruscan cavalrymen battling naked Celtic infantry (Scullard plate 93, cf. plate 97).

44. The Etruscan funeral urns: Nachtergaele 1977: 108–12. The Gauls who invaded Etruria in 299 also defeated a Roman army at Camerinum in Umbria: see Walbank 1957: 187–88; the Roman disaster at Arretium in 284 or 183; see Morgan 1972: 309–25.

45. See App. *Samm.* 6.1, cf. *Gall.* 11, and Oros. 2.20.1, with Harris 1971: 82, and Morgan 1972: 319–20.

46. On the date of this war, see Harris 1971: 45 and 83 n. 2, against Sordi 1960: 128–33 (who wishes to displace the war to the 290s).

Roman defeats (Zon. 8.18). But in the end Falerii, on its high precipice, was destroyed, and the survivors resettled down on the plain (Falerii Nova).⁴⁷

The ultimate military and political failure of the Etruscan city-states in their wars with Rome, in which a case can be made that down to 310 B.C. they were often the attackers, thus does not show an Etruscan decline in vigor. Individually, the Etruscan city-states were militarized, formidable, often aggressive. At Rome at the end of the fourth century “there was no other people—aside from the Gauls—whose arms were more dreaded” (Livy 9.29.2). Perhaps this is Roman propaganda—but good propaganda usually has a basis in truth.⁴⁸

THE CELTS

This brings us to the Celts—the Gallic tribes of the Po Valley, the most obvious exception to the idea that Rome existed in some sort of consensual community of polities. The Celts lived across the Apennine Range from central Italy and the Roman heartland, having conquered the Po from Etruscan city-states in a series of wars between roughly 500 and 350 B.C. Roman culture and society were shaped in crucial ways by Rome’s having become after about 390 a polity located near the barbarian frontier of Europe, having to live in the shadow of chaotic and aggressive tribes with a powerful warrior tradition.⁴⁹ As with all the ancient polities under consideration in this study, however, the powerful warrior tradition among the Celtic peoples of the Po Valley is likely to have arisen as a crucial adaptive response to the pressures of the turbulent and anarchic (pre)state system in which the Celtic communities themselves existed—though the eventual characteristics of that warrior culture came, in turn, to be a powerful contributing element to the violence of that anarchy.⁵⁰

Some Celtic groups fought naked in battle; some sought to foretell the future via the human sacrifice of hundreds of victims; most, like the Etruscans, were headhunters—decorating their war chariots, their horses,

47. On this war and the fate of Falerii, see Potter 1979: 98–100.

48. On Roman fear of the Etruscans, see also Livy 6.22.1, 7.21.9, 10.4.1 and 13.5, 27.24.6—accepted (with reservations) even by Harris 1971: 94 and n. 6.

49. That was the judgment of the Greek historian Polybius: 1.6.7.

50. Parallel: the focus among Greek states both on militarism and the preservation of state honor, in both the Classical and the Hellenistic periods (see above, chaps. 3 and 4)—and of course this is a theme here and in chap. 6 below regarding Rome itself.

and sometimes their houses with the severed heads of dead enemies. Polybius exaggerates when he says that the Celts of northern Italy were peoples who slept on leaves, without the slightest knowledge of any art or science (2.17.10), but he is not exaggerating much when he emphasizes that they had two main occupations: agriculture and war (*ibid.*).⁵¹

Indeed, the Celtic Senones had sacked Rome itself around 390, defeating the Roman army at the Allia River and sacking and burning most of the city. The catastrophe occurred, we are told, as the result of the Senate's responding positively to a plea from the city of Clusium in northern Etruria for an embassy warning off the Senones from attacking it. This led to a clash between the Senone chiefs and the Roman envoys, and thence to a Senone decision to attack Rome itself—another example of the dangers of compellence diplomacy among the militaristic honor societies of the Mediterranean anarchy.⁵² In Roman tradition the citadel on the Capitoline Hill held out—but it may be that the entire city was taken.⁵³

Ancient writers believed that the Celtic sack of the city around 390 was a disaster from which Roman society only gradually recovered (see, e.g., Polyb. 2.18.4; Livy 6.2.4). Romans of the Middle Republic thought that the irregular layout of their city streets was caused by the haste with which Rome had been rebuilt after 390, and Livy says that he cannot really vouch for Roman history before the Celtic sack because most documentation was destroyed (6.1.2–3; cf. Plut. *Num.* 1.2).⁵⁴ Prominent modern scholars have recently argued that the damage done by the Senones to Roman power has been greatly exaggerated, and that soon Rome was again going from strength to strength.⁵⁵ That such a position goes against the emphatically opposite ancient view is not an insuperable problem in itself. But it also goes against the fact that the history of the next fifty years in Latium appears to be a repeat of the fifth century, with Rome fighting the same rivals for power in the same geographical realm as before (Aequi, Volsci, Latin and Etruscan city-states, primarily in Latium and extreme southern Etruria)—and with the same equivocal success. In the 350s the Romans were still fighting wars with Latin Tibur

51. On the warlike culture of the Celts, see Schmidt and Kodderitzsch 1986.

52. On the appeal of Clusium to Rome and the origins of the Senone invasion, see now Williams 2001: 102–9.

53. Discussion in Williams 2001: 144–45.

54. *Ibid.* 140–41. Livy may exaggerate the scale of the destruction of documents: Oakley 1997: 382.

55. So Cornell 1995: 317–22; Oakley 1997: 344–47.

and Praeneste, only thirty miles away.⁵⁶ The evidence of the second Roman treaty with Carthage (ca. 348 B.C.) shows a Rome that has not advanced the geographical scope of its power much beyond the first treaty with Carthage, 150 years previously: Roman power is still limited to Latium, and does not control all states even there (see Polyb. 2.24.5). As Oakley says, no state can have benefited much from having its city destroyed.⁵⁷

About the reality of Roman fear of the Celts there should be no controversy. The fear was not neurotic, nor was it an expression of the frustration of imperialists that Celtic tribes did not meekly accept Roman domination.⁵⁸ Roman fear of the Celts was based on harsh realities. It is patent in the great walls built around the ruined city about 380 B.C.: twenty-four feet high and twelve feet thick.⁵⁹ The completion of this project shows that to some extent the Roman government was in good working order.⁶⁰ But we are told that the building of the walls impoverished the Roman people (Livy 6.32.1–2, cf. 34.1–4), and yet the walls were built—they were viewed as a necessity. Down into the first century B.C. the government periodically felt compelled to decree a *tumultus Gallicus*, a mass mobilization of every able-bodied man in the face of threatened Gallic invasion; even old men and priests of the gods, normally exempt from military duty, were required to serve in such emergencies. The last *tumultus Gallicus* was in 60 B.C. Like the building of the walls, the mobilization was serious government action—highly disruptive, for instance, of the economy; it is unlikely to have been taken merely for reasons of propaganda.⁶¹

The indelible psychological mark of the Celtic disaster is apparent in the ill omen that Roman popular culture for centuries attached to July 18, the day of the battle of the Allia.⁶² Indeed, the Romans believed that the phrase *tumultus Gallicus* itself derived from *timor multus* (great fear)—not true, but indicative of the psychological situation.⁶³ Both Cicero and Sallust viewed wars with the Celts as contests not over power but over survival (Cic. *Off.* 1.38; Sall. *Jug.* 114.2), and thus it was natural that every possible Roman male would serve (Cic. *Front.*

56. See Oakley 1997: 356.

57. Ibid. 345.

58. For both positions, see now Ellis 1998: 128–29.

59. On the great walls of ca. 380, see esp. Saeftlund 1932.

60. Oakley 1997: 346.

61. On the *tumultus Gallicus*, see Bellen 1985: 9–19; cf. now Williams 2001: 171.

62. See Wolski 1956: 30–46; Bellen 1985: esp. 3–25.

63. See Bellen 1985: 10.

46).⁶⁴ The problem was that a city captured and destroyed once could never have a sense that it would not happen again. Indeed, behind the Roman stories of how the Capitol had valiantly held out in 390, and the ideology of *Roma Aeterna* (eternal Rome), there existed—as J. H. C. Williams has shown—a deep fear that destruction could and would happen again, and that Celts would be the perpetrators again. Later this fear was broadened to include any barbarian tribe (Celt or German) living beyond the frontiers of Roman power.⁶⁵

The Romans, of course, were far from exceptional in their fear of the Celts: it was shared by many polities in Italy, and beyond Italy. Thus from Cales near Rome we have medallions depicting Celtic warriors in the act of pillaging temples; from Civitalba in Umbria there is a great bas-relief of angry gods chasing Celts from a temple they have just wrecked; we have already mentioned the funerary urns from Etruria showing the Furies aiding Etruscan soldiers against Gallic warriors.⁶⁶ Fear of the Celts ran deep also among the Greek states on both sides of the Aegean, for northern invasions posed a severe threat to them from the 270s onward. Pyrrhus the king of Epirus, a famous general, considered his victory over a Celtic army in Greece in 274 his greatest military accomplishment (Plut. *Pyrrh.* 26.5, confirmed by the scale of Pyrrhus's dedications to the gods after the victory). Images of fierce struggle with the Celts, with the theme being the protection of civilization from savagery, were as prominent at Pergamum in Ionia as they were in Italy.⁶⁷

Roman fear of the Celts was thus founded on facts. The sack of Rome by the Celtic Senones around 390 was not a onetime trauma, but was itself followed for two centuries by periodic devastating Celtic raids into central Italy, including Latium. Celtic armies invaded Latium in 367 and stationed themselves in the Alban Hills from 361 to 358; one result was another battle fought literally at the gates of Rome in 360. Celts spread devastation in the Roman countryside from Alban bases again in 350 and 349; and perhaps again in 344. According to Livy, the mere rumor of yet another Celtic invasion coming down the Tiber Valley led in 329

64. Cf. Williams 2001: 171 and 175.

65. Ibid. 170–82.

66. The Cales medallions: Nachtergaele 1977: 107–8; the Civitalba reliefs: ibid. 114–23; the funeral urns from Etruria: text above at n. 44.

67. On Greek fear of the Celts, see now Williams 2001: 165–69. Polybius's view of the Celts as very formidable and destructive savages: Eckstein 1995: 119–25. Pyrrhus's dedications to the gods after his Celtic victory: Marchetti 1992: 56–58. The Pergamene emphasis on Celtic savagery in their widespread dedicatory art: see Williams 161 (with further scholarship).

to mobilization of every able-bodied Roman citizen.⁶⁸ The impression left at Rome by the fierce fighting in Latium against the Celts in the mid-fourth century is shown by stories where enormous Gauls fiercely challenge any Roman to single combat.⁶⁹

The Roman expulsion of large Celtic war bands from their bases in the Alban Hills in the 340s relieved a great pressure upon the city, and no doubt facilitated Roman victory in the final war with the Latins in 340–338. Meanwhile, continual Celtic pressure from across the Apennines on the Etruscan city-states helps to explain the Etruscans' increasing inability to deal effectively with Rome.⁷⁰ As Rome extended its domination into central and northern Etruria after 310 the Celts again proved very formidable enemies. Senones destroyed a Roman army at Camerinum in Umbria in 299—the site of the battle is only a hundred miles from Rome. Livy's story is that Roman reinforcements learned of the disaster when they came upon Celtic cavalrymen riding along singing their victory songs, with severed Roman heads hanging from their horses' necks or spiked to their lances (10.26.10–11). Celts were a major force at the great battle of Sentinum in 295, with the Romans allegedly barely holding their own against them (10.28–29)—though Rome won the ultimate victory. Senones played the central role again in the Roman disaster at Arretium in 284 or 283, and there followed an invasion of the Senones and Boii down the Tiber Valley in 283; it came within forty miles of the city before the Romans managed to defeat the invaders at Lake Vadimon. In subsequent fighting Roman armies destroyed the Senones as a tribe, and Rome seized their territory in the northeastern Apennines.⁷¹

Livy lists the Gauls as the most feared of all the fearsome enemies the Romans faced about 300 B.C. (10.29.2; cf. Polyb. 1.6.6–7). Again, facts bear this out. The Senate sought to protect central Italy from Celtic raids by establishing military colonies on the traditional invasion route across the Apennines, capped by Ariminum on the Adriatic, founded in 268 (on Senone land) at the northern entry point of the invasion route. In the 230s Ariminum came under increasing Gallic attack, and although the attacks were repelled, in the early 220s the Celtic threat was felt to be so severe

68. For the chronology of these events, see Oakley 1997: 360–65.

69. On these traditions, see Oakley 1985: 392–410.

70. See text above at n. 42.

71. On the invasion of 283 and the Roman counterattack, see Eckstein 1987: 2–7. Roman tradition asserted that the invasion of Senone territory was provoked by the murder of Roman envoys sent to treat for a prisoner exchange; the story may be apocryphal, but Polybius—who viewed the Celts as violent savages—was prepared to believe it: Polyb. 2.19.9, with Walbank 1957: 189.

that the Romans performed human sacrifice to ward the Celtic danger magically away—a serious act of government, which our sources say went much against Roman religious feeling.⁷² At the same time, the land distribution to Roman citizens proposed by C. Flaminius for the region south of Ariminum caused severe controversy in the Senate over fears that it would provoke the Celts.⁷³ The massive Gallic invasion came in 225, led by the Insubres and the Boii and backed by warriors even from beyond the Alps. The invaders defeated a Roman army in northern Etruria, and got within three days' march of Rome before being defeated at Telamon on the Etruscan coast—savage fighting in which one of the consuls of 225 was killed, and his severed head brought to the Celtic leaders (Polyb. 2.28.10). The Romans believed that the purpose of this invasion was the capture of Rome itself.⁷⁴ Polybius, too, seems to have seen it as a threat to Rome's existence, and praises the Romans for refusing to panic (2.35). In terms of widespread perception of the severity of the threat, note Polybius's view that the Italian allies of Rome felt they were fighting in this war to save themselves from dreadful danger, and not merely to help the Romans (2.23.12).⁷⁵

The Senate responded to the great invasion of 225 by adopting a new strategy (clearly *ad hoc*): Rome now sent armies into the Po Valley for the first time, to devastate the Gallic homelands. By 222 all the Po tribes had sued for peace. But the Senate rightly feared that they were not really subdued, and in 219 decided to establish two large military colonies on the Po River, right in the midst of the tribes. Each colony contained six thousand fighting men and their families—a total of perhaps fifty thousand people in all. The colonies, Tacitus explains, were to be “outer bulwarks” (*propugnacula*) of Italy against Gallic attack (*Ann.* 3.34). The unusual scale of resources that Rome possessed by this period is clear; no other Italian polity would have had the capacity to undertake such an enormous project to control the Celts.⁷⁶

Yet the power and warrior culture of the Po peoples is shown by the

72. Roman anxieties after ca. 230 and desperate preparations to meet the Celtic attack: Polyb. 2.22.7–8 and 11, cf. 2.13.5. This tradition is discounted by Harris 1979: 197–99, and denied by Vishnia 1996: 22–23, but see Eckstein 1982: 69–95 (with special emphasis on the human sacrifice of 228)—a view accepted by, e.g., Rich 1993: 63.

73. See esp. Polyb. 2.21.7–8; other sources in Broughton 1951: 225. This controversy is inconvenient for Vishnia 1996: 11–48, whose thesis is that there was an aggressive senatorial plan to conquer all the Celts, including those in the Po Valley, from the 280s.

74. Florus 1.20.3; Dio frg. 50.4 = Zon. 8.20; discussion: Williams 2001: 174–75.

75. Cf. the comments of Williams 2001: 130.

76. Again, the origins of those enormous Roman resources, which are what made the Roman city-state truly exceptional in the Mediterranean, will be discussed in chap. 7, below.

Gallic response: a new war against Rome on a massive scale (218). The settlers at one colony were completely driven away, the land commissioners (including an ex-consul) captured.⁷⁷ Moreover, when Hannibal arrived in the Po in autumn 218 he found a rich recruiting ground, and when he crossed the Apennines in 217 to invade central Italy, half his men were Celtic warriors. They were serving for pay, yet in a sense Hannibal's invasion represented the second major Celtic invasion of central Italy in seven years—and one far more destructive than the invasion of 225. The Senate, well aware that Po Valley Celts made up a large proportion of Hannibal's army, ordered a counterattack upon the Po Valley from Ariminum, to distract the tribes from aiding Hannibal; but the result was a disaster in which twenty-five thousand Roman soldiers (including their commanding general, a consul-elect) were killed. For the next fifteen years the Senate stood on the defensive on the Celtic frontier. In 207 Celtic warriors from the Po made up a substantial portion of the invading army of Hasdrubal, Hannibal's brother.⁷⁸

The Celts of the Po were brought under control only by a succession of ten bloody campaigns in the 190s: fully two hundred years after the sack of Rome. The Boii were expelled from Italy; but the defensive arrangements made south of the river in the 180s—the colonies and *viritaine* land assignments—are evidence of Roman concern for the future. And regarding threats to Italy from tribal peoples to the north, the Romans were right to be concerned.⁷⁹

The above discussion shows that the Celtic peoples of the Po Valley were often the aggressors against Rome, the side doing the raiding and attacking. Indeed, the Etruscans and other Italian polities acquiesced in Roman hegemony not merely because they feared Rome (they did), but also because they feared Celtic invasions, which they themselves were unable to prevent (see, e.g., the Civitalba reliefs); Rome provided what protection was available. To the Romans, the bitter lesson of these long, difficult, and costly wars was that mere defense on the Celtic frontier could not prevent periodic Celtic invasions of Italy; the only way to do that was to extend Roman control—difficult and dangerous as that task was—into the homelands of the attackers. The Romans would later present themselves to the Greeks of the Aegean as the (co)defenders of

77. Discussion: Eckstein 1987: 18–28.

78. Celts as half of Hannibal's army by 217–216: *ibid.* 29–30; so, too, Cornell 1995: 325. The disasters of 216 and the long period of Roman defensive: Eckstein 1987: 36–63.

79. On the purpose of the colonies and *viritaine* allotments south of the Po in the 180s, see, rightly, Williams 2001: 207–11.

civilization against the barbarian threat. The substantial success achieved by this propaganda was because, again, in good part it was true.⁸⁰

That is: left uncontrolled, the Po tribes would have made stable town life in Italy (such as it was) extremely difficult. One may compare the destructive impact of the raids of their relatives the Galatians, from their bases in upland Anatolia, on Greek town life on the Ionian coast from the 270s down into the 150s.⁸¹ The Etruscan cities and Rome thus faced the same pressing task to the north, a hard and bloody one—for the Celts were large in numbers and a fierce warrior culture.⁸² The Etruscans failed in that task, as they failed to maintain their cities in the Po Valley itself. Rome succeeded, and not only because, like the Etruscan cities, the Romans possessed a heavily militarized culture (they did, and no one denies it), but also because Rome alone possessed the large resources, and the capability to mobilize them, that were required to impose control on the populous and dangerous homeland of the Celts of northern Italy.

THE SAMNITES

From the mid-fifth century the Samnites—the Romans' distant cultural and ethnic kinsmen—were Rome's neighbors to the southeast. They were so ferocious that the Greeks claimed the name "Samnite" derived from *saunion*, the Greek word for "javelin"; Polybius matches the Samnites with the Celts as fearsome in battle (1.6.6). Our sources stress the brutality of their raids from the Apennine Mountains down into the agricultural plains.⁸³ Male Samnite graves all contain weapons—and were marked by spears.⁸⁴ Much is sometimes made of the fact that an important tutelary figure of the Romans was the wolf—but the wolf was also a totemic figure of important Samnite tribes. And the Italic wolf was not the protector she-wolf as at Rome, but a wolf on the hunt.⁸⁵ The Samnites' reputation was one of primitiveness and ruthlessness. Virgil calls them "harsh" (*Aen.* 7.729: *asper*); Strabo calls them "beasts" (5.4.2).

80. See Williams 2001: 158–80.

81. See McShane 1964: 60–61, 135, 154, 181, 183.

82. On the ancient perception of huge Celtic numbers, see Eckstein 1995: 120–21.

83. See Salmon 1967: 28, 30, and 64 (with sources). Samnite raids: see Justin 32.2.3; Livy 7.30.21, 10.20.9, and 31.2; Zon. 8.7.

84. Salmon 1967: 62–63.

85. The Roman wolf: see, e.g., Raaflaub 1996. The argument from wolf symbolism made by enemies of Rome in antiquity: Just. 38.67–68. The wolf on the hunt, totem of the Samnite Hirpini and the Samnite-related Lucanians (literally, Wolfmen): Strabo 5.4.12, Festus p. 93 Lindsey; Serv. *ad Aen.* 11.785. Some Italiote Greeks conceived of the Samnites as descended from Spartans (Strabo 5.4).

This is clearly a simplification by the Samnites' enemies, who provide us with the only accounts we have of Samnite conduct. But archaeology suggests the violent nature of Samnium, where there were few towns and no cities but where hilltop forts covered the land.⁸⁶

From about 550 B.C. we find the Samnites and related Italic peoples moving south through the central Apennines, conquering the previous lords of the mountains, the Italic-speaking Opici (or Osci), and merging with them; the Osci, in turn, had previously conquered and then merged with the aboriginal inhabitants of these regions.⁸⁷ The Samnites were one of a wide grouping of Sabellian-speaking peoples who were on the move.⁸⁸ The mountains through which the Sabellian peoples were filtering southward contained some rich agricultural valleys but were mostly a poor country. The result was periodic overpopulation, which in turn led to the expansion of the Sabellian groups via conquest: the need for new farmland and pastureland appears to have been never-ending.⁸⁹ Indeed, many sources say that the Samnites and other Sabellians had a ceremony that handled overpopulation by sending forth young men on the road to war and conquest: the *ver sacrum* (sacred spring); it began with a sacrifice to Mamers, the Italic god of war (Roman Mars). Some modern scholars doubt the story, but as one of the doubters herself says, stereotypes such as this do not become attached to peoples arbitrarily. That is: the tradition concerning the sacred spring is, at the least, testimony to the fear inspired by the continuous and violent expansion of the Samnites and other hill peoples. Thucydides, writing around 415 B.C., has central and southern Italy subject to their continual aggressive expansion (6.2).⁹⁰

The Italic peoples of the Apennines were expanding through violence in all directions in this period: southeast into Apulia, where they came to within two days' march of the great Greek city of Tarentum; south

86. On the social meaning of the numerous Samnite hill forts, see Oakley 1995, with the critique of Rathbone 1999: 307–8. Note that the countryside of Hellenistic Ionia was militarized and covered with forts too: see Ma 2000: 341–42. It was natural in that world.

87. See Salmon 1967: 28–29. The overlapping conquests of what became the Samnite country is yet another example of the prevailing violent anarchy of the ancient Mediterranean.

88. The term “Sabellian-speaking” to describe Samnites, Sabines, and related peoples of the Apennines is technically inaccurate, since Roman sources apply the term only late and never comprehensively to these groups: see Dench 1995: 103–5. “Sabellian” is used here, as often in modern scholarship, merely for convenient reference to all the Italic-speaking peoples of the Apennines.

89. See Cornell 1995: 345.

90. On the *ver sacrum*, see now Dench 1995: 189–93, cf. 45, doubting historicity: but cf. 68, 100, 141.

and southwest into Calabria, where they put enormous pressure on the Greek coastal cities right down to the Straits of Messina; west into the plain of Campania; and northwest toward Latium.⁹¹ Thus Rome and its neighbors were facing the same problem as most other settled communities in Italy in regard to the Sabellians: at the early levels of the great Samnite temple at Pietrabbondante (late fifth or early fourth century B.C.), most dedications are weapons taken from foreign peoples in battle.⁹²

In the early fifth century Samnite groupings infiltrated down into Campania, controlled at the time mostly by Etruscan and Greek polities, which in turn had conquered Campania from the original inhabitants.⁹³ After about 450 B.C. Samnite infiltration was transformed into war: the great city-states of Capua (an Etruscan foundation) and Cumae (a Greek one), and numerous smaller towns, were sacked, their populations partly massacred. By around 400 the Samnites had seized both Campania and almost all the Greek towns southward along the Italian west coast; only Neapolis (Naples) held out.⁹⁴ The Samnite conquest led to a decline in the level of material civilization.⁹⁵ But over the next century the Samnite groups gradually merged with the Greek, Etruscan, and indigenous populations. The problem facing these new multiethnic Campanians was that the Samnite pressure from the Apennines did not cease—and they proved unable to defend themselves from it. This is not because they were peaceable: wall paintings from fourth-century Capua depict brutally militaristic themes, a favorite one being an armored horseman returning home, leading prisoners and booty in triumph.⁹⁶ But the Campanian city-states were individually no match for the newcomers, yet because they were riven by the bitter rivalries and enmities typical of the ancient Mediterranean interstate world, they could not pool their resources and marshal a united front.⁹⁷

By contrast with the situation in Campania, the tribal units of the Samnites proper (the Caraceni, Pentri, Caudini, and Hirpini) appear to have developed some capacity for mutual cooperation. They managed to cre-

91. The situation is acknowledged even by Oakley in a paper whose thesis is the exceptional bellicosity and aggressiveness of the Romans: Oakley 1993: 13.

92. On Pietrabbondante, see Dench 1995: 138–39.

93. Another brutal story here, of course, of overlapping conquests: see above, n. 87.

94. On the Samnite conquest of Campania after 450, see conveniently Lomas 1993: 33–34.

95. Archaeological evidence: Heurgon 1942: 340–41. Admitted by the first century A.D. Roman historian Velleius Paterculus (1.4.2)—himself of Samnite descent.

96. Militaristic themes in Capuan wall paintings: see Dench 1995: 64–65.

97. Divisions and rivalries in Samnite-dominated Campania: see Cornell 1995: 346–47.

ate an institution that moderns call the Samnite League, which was led in times of crisis by a real league general. This is a very considerable achievement in intercommunity cooperation: more effective than the Etruscan League or the Latin League. But this study is not arguing that significant intercommunity cooperation was impossible in the ancient Mediterranean; one can see it with the growth of the Aetolian and Achaean Leagues in mainland Greece. Nevertheless, that the Samnites could cooperate with each other does not mean a triumph of the Constructivist critics of the Realist approach to interstate relations in general: for Samnite cooperation consisted mostly in war and expansion against non-Samnite polities in all directions. It was all part of the competitive nature of the central Italian interstate system.⁹⁸

In the mid-fourth century, while some Samnite groupings were seizing Campania, another cooperative venture was expansion northwest into the middle Liris Valley and Monte Cassino, a region rich in agricultural resources and iron. It was held by the Volsci, an Italic hill people who had given Latium great trouble for a hundred years, but who, Livy says, were now declining in power (7.27.7). Thus they were no longer strong enough to act as a buffer between the Samnites and the Romans—and the middle Liris was separated from Latium only by the Monte Cassino range. The Romans, for their part, were by the 350s recovering from the destruction of the city by the Celts, had regained much power in Latium, and were extending their own hegemony toward the Liris and Cassino. Literary tradition has a treaty between Rome and the Samnite League in the 350s demarcating influence along the middle Liris. Both sides subsequently crippled the Volsci on each side of the river. The fate of the Volsci was, again, typical of the grim realities of the ancient world.⁹⁹

In the 340s the Samnites attacked to the west again, threatening Teanum Sidicinum, gateway to the Campanian plain.¹⁰⁰ Teanum called for help from Capua, the leading Campanian city-state—but the Samnites defeated the Capuan army twice. With Capua itself now severely threatened, the Capuans in turn called upon Rome for help, and received it (343 B.C.). Livy's story is that the Capuans, in return for Roman protection, offered *deditio*: total surrender into Roman control, with the city and the people becoming, literally, Roman property (7.31.4–5). The Ca-

98. On the Samnite League, see Salmon 1967: 80–87. The Aetolian and Achaean Leagues, though their member states also cooperated with each other, were similarly warlike and expansionist toward the outside: see above, chap. 4.

99. On these developments see conveniently Salmon 1967: 189–94.

100. On its strategic importance, see Oakley 1998: 282.

puan *deditio* has been doubted because it provides a legal justification for Roman intervention against the Samnites despite Rome's being at peace and having a treaty with them, and because Capua seems too powerful a state to have offered Rome such abject terms of surrender. But *deditio* to Rome in the face of a severe threat from a third party traditionally did not lead to permanent total submission—the sort of thing the Capuans would not have accepted. Rather, it created a temporary status and usually led to a more amenable outcome, which could include formal and honorable alliance, and this is likely what happened in 343. Hence the Capuan *deditio* need not be doubted.¹⁰¹

The sequence of events in which polities under severe threat call upon more powerful states for aid (first Teanum Sidicinum and Capua, then Capua and Rome) was, as we have noted, a frequent situation in the Mediterranean interstate anarchy.¹⁰² Taking such polities under protection often had no consequences except to enhance one's status and influence (as at Livy 8.19.1–3 or 8.25.3). Yet, depending on circumstances, the acceptance of another state into one's protection could lead to grave consequences indeed—and the Capuan plea was such a case. Thus Livy says of the major war that now developed between Rome and the Samnites that “it was of external origin, and not owing to themselves” (7.29.3). That is, Capua and the Samnite threat to it had been the catalyst.¹⁰³

The pattern here is familiar to modern political scientists. Stephen Walt has hypothesized that in an anarchy, alliances by states under severe threat tend to be made with the least threatening great power. Thus we need not believe that the Capuans saw Rome as unthreatening—merely as less immediately dangerous than the Samnites. Simultaneously, we can see that the Capuan action in 343 is an example of Geir Lundestad's point about empire by invitation—invitation to hegemony from polities under severe local threat.¹⁰⁴

The Roman Senate responded positively to the Capuan plea—just as the Capuan government had responded positively to the plea from Teanum. This was diplomatically aggressive. The Romans in 343 were not simply seeking to maintain order on their southeastern frontier—defensive imperialism.¹⁰⁵ Rather, the Senate was significantly extending Roman power

101. See Oakley 1998: 285–89 (with earlier scholarship).

102. See text above at n. 3.

103. *Belli causa extrinsecus venit, non orta inter se ipsos est.*

104. The theory of the least threatening great power: Walt 1987: chaps. 1, 2, and 8. Empire by invitation: references above, n. 3.

105. So Scullard 1980: 131–32, rightly criticized by Raaflaub et al. 1992: 25–26.

and influence into a new region, and there is evidence that the decision was controversial at Rome precisely because Campania was so far away.¹⁰⁶

Recent studies, under the influence of W. V. Harris, have in fact made Rome the sole imperialist aggressor in the war that followed.¹⁰⁷ Stephen Oakley even asserts that the Romans accepted the *deditio* of the Capuans “in order to provoke the Samnites to war.”¹⁰⁸ Other scholars state briefly that both the Samnites and Rome were expansionist in the mid-fourth century, but then offer an analysis of the expansionist and warlike internal structures of Rome alone, as if this provided the key to subsequent events—as if Rome was unique.¹⁰⁹

But in fourth-century Campania we are clearly dealing with a natural and objective clash of interest between two expanding powers, not one, in a world unmediated by international institutions. The two powers were approximately equal at this point in both territorial extent and military manpower.¹¹⁰ Thus the imperialism of the Samnites should not be downplayed in analyzing how the crisis came about. Indeed, Teanum Sidicinum, Capua, and Rome were in different ways all responding to a situation ultimately caused by Samnite aggression; Rome intervened when the local Campanian states could not handle it. The Roman response to the plea from Capua involved a willingness to risk war:¹¹¹ the Senate acted vigorously (too vigorously for some Romans) in order to prevent the resources of Campania from falling to a vigorously expanding Samnite power, and to gain an amount of control over those resources by establishing Rome as the protector of Campania from Samnite attack. But as we have shown in chapters 3 and 4 above, such diplomatic risk taking was characteristic of all major ancient states—a response to the interstate system of anarchy and self-help in which those states existed. When all large powers act in such a diplomatically aggressive fashion (and in antiquity they all did), we should not restrict our historical explanations to the characteristics of one unit in the system (i.e., Rome) but look as well to the kind of war-prone interactions fostered by an anarchic in-

106. On the trouble the Senate had in imposing its Campanian policy, see Hölkeskamp 1987: 62–63, and Hölkeskamp 1993: 12–13 (with sources).

107. Harris 1979: 177; Rowland 1983: 759–60; Raaflaub 1996: 277–78; Raaflaub et al. 1992: 25–29; Cornell 1995: 353–54 (with references to Harris at nn. 22 and 26); Oakley 1993: 11.

108. Oakley 1993: 31 (my emphasis).

109. See Raaflaub et al. 1992: 26 (acknowledging that Rome and the Samnites were equally expansionist), followed by analysis of the internal expansion-bearing structures of Rome alone (26–34), and ending by stressing Rome’s unique bellicosity (34).

110. See Cornell 1992: 351 and nn. 17–18.

111. Emphasized by Raaflaub et al. 1992: 26–27.

terstate system. The Samnites, for their part—in the face of Roman warnings to refrain from attacking Capua now that it was under Roman protection (ancient compellence diplomacy at its most provocative)—did not hesitate to provide the war.¹¹² Moreover, the sites of the fighting in this war most likely to be historical are in the plain of Campania itself, as a result of Samnite offensives, not in the Samnite mountains.¹¹³

In a system of militarized interstate anarchy there is no contradiction between protecting security interests and expanding one's power and influence. It is part of a normal search, under pressure and threat, to gain more resources and strategic depth, and to deprive rivals of both. If the Senate had not acted, Campania would have fallen to Samnite expansion; it was because the Campanians lacked the power to defend themselves from severe attack that Rome was summoned. Thus the circumstances surrounding the Roman decision to intervene in Campania constitute a classic case not only supporting Walt and Lundestad (see above), but also supporting the thesis of "preclusive" expansionism of Charles Glaser and George Liska—the effort to preempt a rival by taking a position of dominance in a given area. Capua had acted in similar fashion in answering the pleas from Teanum. These are typical state actions under a self-help regime.¹¹⁴

The first war ended in a draw. A second war (327–304) began as another Roman response to Samnite expansion into Campania. In the 320s Samnite power finally reached the coast—not via Teanum (though the Samnites still controlled it), but farther east via Greek Naples. The Samnite military presence at Naples, aided by new control over the nearby city of Nola, was the catalyst for the war. The Samnites, Livy says, were preparing to take to the sea as pirates (8.26.1): this is not merely Roman propaganda, for the Senate took specific action against it, establishing a large Latin colony on the island of Pontia to guard the coast of Latium (8.28.7). But Roman-Samnite relations at this point were already in difficulty because of aggressive action by Rome itself: the establishment in 328 of a large Latin colony at Fregellae guarding the Liris Valley route into Latium—but on the left (Samnite) bank of the Liris.¹¹⁵

112. On Samnite belligerence in 343, see de Sanctis 1916: 281; Frederickson 1984: 207–8 and nn. 7 and 17; cf. Oakley 1998: 284–85.

113. For sensible discussion of the course of the war, see Salmon 1967: 194–206.

114. See Glaser, 1992: 177 and n. 29; Liska 1978: 4–6. Cf. Sheehan 1996: 8; Waltz 1979: 105 and 126, and Waltz 1988: 624; Taylor 1978: 127.

115. Rivalry for influence at Naples in the early 320s (which included a bid from Tarentum in the far south); Salmon 1967: 217–19. Pontia: 222 and n. 4. Fregellae: 216.

We see here again the clash of two expanding and mutually suspicious entities. Indeed, to understand the situation fully one must understand (again) that the Samnites in this period were not just expanding toward the west, but in several directions. Thus in 317 Rome gained important allies among the towns of Apulia, the region to the southeast of Samnium: as Livy explicitly says, this was not because the Apulians loved Rome but because they greatly feared continuing Samnite attacks.¹¹⁶ This, once more, is the grim principle of alliance making under anarchy adduced by Stephen Walt.¹¹⁷

In this second war the Romans did not remain on the defensive in Campania and on the Liris but initiated a strategy of invading the Samnite country. The object was to weaken the Samnites by damaging their agricultural base, and to take revenge for Samnite attacks. The first Roman operation of this sort ended in military disaster at Samnite hands in 321 at the Caudine Forks. But Rome would persist in this strategy for decades to come—and indeed the decisive stroke ending the second war was a massively successful Roman invasion of western Samnium in 305.

Some modern scholars see this offensive strategy as evidence of Rome's exceptional belligerence and aggression.¹¹⁸ But the Samnites, too, were on the offensive. In 315 a Samnite army advancing into Latium inflicted a terrible defeat on Roman forces at Lautulae on the coast, after which the Samnites devastated Latium as far as the city of Ardea—a day's march from Rome.¹¹⁹ The seriousness of the crisis is shown by the appointment of dictators at Rome to manage the war, and the repeated reelection of proven military men to the consulship, despite a law against iteration in office. It is also shown by the decision in 311 to raise the size of consular armies from one legion to two legions, despite the strain on manpower—and to cover the new need for men by reforms in tactics (the replacement of the heavy hoplite phalanx by the looser manipular formation) that brought into army service large numbers of less wealthy citizens.¹²⁰

Roman recovery from Lautulae was marked by victory over a second Samnite invasion of Latium in 313; but in 306 another Samnite offen-

116. Livy 9.13.6: *Samnitiū magis iniuriis et odio quam beneficio ullo populi Romani*. Devastating Samnite attacks on the Apulian towns in 310 and 307: Salmon 1967: 245–47 (with sources).

117. Walt 1987: chaps. 1, 2, and 8.

118. Harris 1979: 175–82, esp. 176–77; Cornell 1995: 353–54.

119. See Salmon 1967: 234–38 (with sources).

120. Reforms of 311: see Cornell 1995: 354 and n. 29 (with sources and modern studies); Raaflaub 1996: 297.

sive into Latium, this time across the Liris, reached to within forty miles of Rome—while there was another Samnite offensive into Campania. And though the campaign of 305 ended with a decisive Roman invasion of western Samnium, it began with yet another Samnite invasion of Campania, which reached to Capua itself. The Roman experience of these Samnite offensives led to the establishment of no less than five large Latin colonies to guard the invasion routes toward Latium.¹²¹

Moreover, Rome was not the only polity that responded to Sabellian pressure by taking the offensive into the hill country. This was a strategy adopted by Italiote Greek states, especially by Tarentum (see below). Success in such search-and-destroy operations would certainly increase control over the hill peoples, and increase prestige in general; the Roman elite, like the Tarentine elite, was aware of this. Yet the main point for us is that the Roman strategy of invading Samnium, about which modern scholars make so much, was both a response to Samnite pressure against the lowlands, and, though aggressive, was not exceptional. What was exceptional was the eventual Roman success in the strategy—unlike the experience of the Italiotes, including Tarentum. Success, in turn, came about through the Roman ability to mobilize more resources and more effectively than any Italiote polity: Roman attacks were larger, and Rome could take serious losses. The reasons behind this ability to mobilize greater resources (already apparent in our discussions of Roman struggles with the Etruscans and the Celts above) have to do with the structure of the Roman state itself as it emerged after the 330s.¹²²

A third war between Rome and the Samnites broke out in 298, shortly after the end of the second war, as a Samnite response to the Roman decision to take Lucanian polities under protection in the face of Samnite threats. This third war was marked by more Roman invasions of Samnium, capped by a major victory there in 293 that brought the struggle temporarily to an end. Does this show that the Samnites had now become mere passive targets of Roman aggression? This war, like the others, was marked as well by Samnite offensives into Campania, and even north of Rome, where Samnite armies united with Gallic tribes and

121. The Samnite invasion of Latium in 313: Salmon 1967: 238 (with sources); acknowledged by Cornell 1995: 354. The Samnite offensives toward Latium in 306 and into Campania in 306 and 305: *ibid.* 248–53 (with sources). Cornell insists that the pattern of this war is one solely of “Rome pressing ahead with an aggressive strategy” (354), though his own narrative shows this is only half the story.

122. Mobilization effectiveness is one of the great sources of state power under the famous hypothesis of Raymond Aron. See chap. 7 below.

Etruscan city-states—the Romans were not alone in engaging in far-flung diplomacy. The result was the great battle of Sentinum in 295, fought to prevent the Samnites, Gauls, and Etruscans from sweeping down the Tiber Valley from the north toward Rome. Rome won at Sentinum, but the battle was difficult and bloody, and defeat might have been devastating. The extent of the crisis as it was perceived by the Senate is evident in the appointment of five experienced promagistrates for the fighting in 295—at a time when promagistracies were a new idea and rare. Leading Roman commanders were elected to three, four, and even five consulships in this period—showing that normal aristocratic rivalries for office (and even the rules of Roman law) were submerged by a desperate need for competence on the battlefield against difficult and stubborn opponents.¹²³

Thus Rome engaged with the Samnites as a fierce competitor among other fierce competitors in the unforgiving state-system of Tyrrhenian Italy. Nor did the great war of the 290s completely break the Samnites' will. Pyrrhus of Epirus found support against Rome among Samnite groupings during his invasion of Italy in 270s; so did Hannibal in 217–210; still later, Samnium was the center of anti-Roman feeling in the rebellion of Rome's allies in 90–88 B.C. Samnite leaders were few and late in entering the Roman Senate—far fewer, for instance, than Etruscans.¹²⁴

A look at the history and culture of Rome's other rival in the south, Greek Tarentum, reveals a culture as militaristic and diplomatically assertive as that of Rome or the Samnites. Yet Tarentum, too, existed in a system of warlike polities as anarchic and ruthless as that of Tyrrhenian Italy, and had to struggle to survive.

TARENTUM

Tarentum (Greek Taras) was founded around 725 B.C., primarily by colonists from Sparta. It had the best harbor in southeastern Italy, and a large and fertile hinterland. Tarentine tradition stressed with pride that the region had been taken by war from the original population.¹²⁵ But

123. The promagistracies of 295: Cornell 1995: 360 (with sources). On the repeated consulships of great soldiers in this period, see even Oakley 1993: 31 n. 1; cf. in detail also below, chap. 6. Roman fear of the Samnites: Livy 8.33.3, 8.37.6–7, 9.43.5–6, 10.21.1–4.

124. See Dench 1995: 212–16; cf. 143–45.

125. See Paus. 10.10.6–8; Strabo 6.3.2. On the violence of the foundation legends: Brauer 1986: 4–5.

the rich coastal plain of Tarentum had few natural defenses and was always a tempting target; hence Tarentum always possessed a strong military tradition. Tarentine militarism derived from the necessities imposed by the environment.¹²⁶

War between Tarentum and the indigenous peoples was unrelenting. One result was that Tarentum developed a policy—not unlike Rome—of placing new colonies at strategic defensive points on seized indigenous land. Its early difficulties meant that Tarentum did not partake in the Italiote intellectual flowering of the sixth century; in the 490s it was still ruled by kings backed by a cavalry aristocracy.¹²⁷ Tarentine militarism in the fifth century is shown by the brutal triumphalism of its dedications of statue groups at the great shrine of Apollo at Delphi for its victories over indigenous peoples (Paus. 10.10.6 and 13.10). In the 470s the Tarentines destroyed the Messapian city of Carbina, southeast of Tarentum, down to women and children who had taken refuge in a famous temple (Ath. 12.522D). But the Tarentine army then suffered disastrous defeat at the hands of the Messapians, who remained a powerful enemy down into the middle of the fourth century.¹²⁸

In this early period Tarentum also faced severe competition from the powerful Greek cities of Siris and Sybaris; later it was overshadowed by Croton, which established a hegemony stretching from Calabria to Metapontum (at Tarentum's doorstep). Metapontum itself had been founded as a colony by Sybaris to block Tarentine expansion to the southwest, and the two cities became bitter enemies. Thus for at least three hundred years after its founding, Tarentum—like Rome—had a warlike history marked by difficult struggle and periodic setbacks.¹²⁹

Indeed, southern Italy in the eighth through the third centuries B.C. was—like most regions in Mediterranean antiquity—a world of constant warfare unmediated by international law. The indigenous inhabitants (called in general Iapygians, and divided into tribes such as the Messapians and Brundisians) were warlike, and their resistance to the incoming

126. See the comments of Lomas 1993: 21.

127. Constant war with indigenous peoples: see *Syll.*³: 21 and 40. Outlying military colonies and the militarized aristocracy: Carter 1975: 7 and n. 4; cf. Brauer 1986: 25. Failure to participate in Italiote intellectualism: Brauer 15 and 18.

128. Tarentine destruction of Carbina is confirmed by archaeology at the likely site; actions allegedly included the rape of women, girls, and boys (Ath. 12.522D). The Messapian victory (late 470s?): Hdt. 7.170. Messapians still a threat in the 340s: Plut. *Agis* 3. See Lamboley 1983: 523–33.

129. On the enmity and threats from Metapontum, Siris, and Sybaris, and later from Croton: see Brauer 1986: 13–14 and 29–30. On the difficult early strategic situation of Tarentum, see also Raaflaub et al. 1992: 17.

Greeks was fierce.¹³⁰ All Greek colonies, not just Tarentum, established their territory by conquest; the literary-historical tradition on this is supported by the archaeology of indigenous site destruction.¹³¹ Meanwhile, wars among the Italiote cities themselves were constant. Siris was destroyed around 540 by an alliance of Sybaris, Metapontum, and Rhegium; Croton achieved its dominance via the destruction of Sybaris around 510; an attempt to reestablish Sybaris in 453 (New Sybaris) ended with its destruction by the Crotoniates; enmity between Rhegium and its neighbor Locri (which, with Hipponium, had fought a successful war against Croton) was ended only by the destruction of Rhegium in 387 by Syracuse. The latter event was part of Syracusan imperial expansion in the 380s that led to the capture of both Croton and Locri; Caulonia and Hipponium were destroyed.¹³² Archaeology shows that in the fifth century even small cities such as Caulonia and Elea had enormous fortifications; clearly, they needed them.¹³³

The world of the Italiote Greeks in this period was thus—like so much of the Mediterranean in antiquity—anarchic both in the Waltzian sense of the absence of international law, and in the practical meaning of prevailing violence and interstate instability. True, there was an organization called by modern scholars the Italiote League, formed around 420 to protect member states from Lucanian (and, later, Syracusan) attacks. But its membership fluctuated radically, and since its headquarters and treasury were at the temple of Hera Lacinia in the territory of Croton, it was at least partly an instrument of Crotoniate hegemony—which made other poleis leery of it.¹³⁴ Indeed, the Italiote city-states demonstrate the constant balancing by smaller states against any possible hegemon that was typical of polis culture in the Greek homeland. And this was true despite continual and intensifying pressure from the hill peoples upon the Greek coast.¹³⁵

130. See Grieco 1980: 7–8.

131. See LaGeniere 1979: 86–87.

132. Destruction of Siris and Sybaris: Lomas 1993: 30 (with sources). Destruction of New Sybaris: Wallbank 1957: 225 (with sources); a new settlement by surviving New Sybarites was in turn destroyed by Italic Bruttians (*ibid.*). The conflicts among Rhegium, Locri, Hipponium, and Croton: Woodhead 1962: 58 and 87. The Syracusan assault on southern Italy: Caven 1990: chap. 8 (with sources).

133. See Woodhead 1962: 63 and 65.

134. See Lomas 1993: 32. When Tarentum became the leader of the league, its headquarters and treasury were shifted to Tarentine territory.

135. Discussion of balancing tendencies against large states in polis culture: above, chap. 3. Note the bitter judgment on the Italiotes by Brauer 1986: 14: “spiders in a bottle”; similar: Lomas 1993: 32.

Yet Tarentum gradually became the dominant state in the region. In the 430s it seized the site of destroyed Siris, at the southern end of Metapontine territory, and established there the colony of Heraclea. The planting of the Tarentine colony at Heraclea intensified enmity with Metapontum—as well as with Thurii, south of Heraclea. The Thurians now formed alliances with indigenous enemies of Tarentum—the Messapians and Brundisians—putting on pressure from several directions, and war between Thurii and Tarentum was a regular occurrence. But war led to Tarentine victories, and by the 370s Metapontum itself had fallen under Tarentine control.¹³⁶

One reason for the gradual rise of Tarentum to power was internal consensus. In 473, after the Tarentine disaster at the hands of the Messapians (see above), a revolution replaced the monarchy with a broadly based democracy; Tarentum thereafter enjoyed a long period of political stability (note the praise of the Tarentine political system in Arist. *Pol.* 1320b, written ca. 340 B.C.)—unlike many rival cities, which were politically divided and chaotic.¹³⁷ But the new Tarentine democracy was just as militaristic as the monarchy had been: its chief magistrate was the *stratēgos* (general), a title that was not honorific any more than it was in Athens, the Aetolian League, or the Achaean League. Rather, it expressed the reality that warfare—as in so many other ancient states—was expected on an annual basis. The *stratēgos* had great power within city politics, to go with his heavy external responsibilities.¹³⁸

The rise of Tarentum to hegemony in southeastern Italy was also facilitated by the Syracusan wars of the 380s, from which Tarentum managed to stay aloof. Dionysius I's destructive victories over the Italiote cities created a significant Syracusan empire in Italy—an empire, however, that did not long outlast his death; but although the Italiotes soon rebelled, and successfully, these cities were permanently damaged. Their subsequent weakness was an important factor in the rise of Tarentine power.¹³⁹

In the 370s and 360s the Tarentine statesman and philosopher Archytas—a friend of Plato—engineered the greatest expansion of Tarentine

136. The fierce enmity between Thurii and Tarentum: see Brauer 1986: 30–31. Thurian alliance with the Messapians and Brundisians: Woodhead 1962: 88 (with evidence). A Tarentine dedication at Delphi celebrating victory over Thurii: *ibid.*

137. On this Tarentine internal advantage: Raaflaub et al. 1992: 16 and 22 (with sources).

138. On the Tarentine *stratēgos*, see Sartori 1953: 84–88 (with sources). The office was annual and could not be held consecutively, but reelection was not forbidden.

139. See Lomas 1993: 35 and 83 (with sources).

power and influence. Archytas was *stratēgos* seven times during these years, and the influence of Tarentum stretched from Rhegium in the south as far northeast as Illyria, and as far northwest as Naples. Archytas was a skilled diplomat, gaining control of the Italiote League and limiting Syracusan interests in southern Italy—but the ultimate basis of Tarentine power and influence was not diplomatic. Nor was it economic, although Tarentum by the mid-fourth century had finally become a wealthy city, and an intellectual center.¹⁴⁰ Rather, the expansion of Tarentine influence was based—as the expansion of influence was usually based in the ancient world—on military power. In this period the Tarentine army numbered thirty thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry: the cavalry were famous; the infantry were also of good quality, for they were often employed in offensives into the Italic hill country (see below). In addition, ancient writers say that the Tarentine war fleet was now the most powerful among the Western Greeks.¹⁴¹ The area enclosed within the city walls now rivaled Classical Athens at its height, the total population approximated Classical Athens, and the Tarentine army equaled in size the Athenian army under Pericles—though the Tarentines were able to put a higher percentage of armed citizens into the field (22,000 vs. 13,000).¹⁴²

Along with military strength came militaristic ideology. Like contemporary Romans and many other Hellenistic states, the Tarentines worshipped Victory: given both Tarentine strength and the multiple dangers the city faced, this should cause no surprise.¹⁴³ The goddess Victory (Greek *Νίκη*) appears widely on fourth-century Tarentine coinage; often she is crowning an armored cavalryman—a figure more and more frequent on the coinage after 300 B.C.¹⁴⁴ From 300 Tarentum also possessed a large and famous statue of Nike sculpted by a disciple of the great Lysippus; it stood in the center of the city. The emperor Augustus eventually had it placed in the Senate at Rome—which tells us much about its sym-

140. Extent of Tarentine power ca. 360: Willeumier 1939: 70–75. Wealth came from agriculture, fishing, and the export of crimson-dyed cloth: 213–35. Cultural and intellectual sophistication: 563–610.

141. Excellent cavalry: Willeumier 1939: 186–88 and 213–17. Prowess of the infantry: Lomas 1993: 36. Formidable navy: Willeumier 192–93 (with sources). Tarentine wealth obviously was an important factor supporting the growth of the city's military power: Brauer 1986: 45–46.

142. Urban size: Willeumier 1939: 242; total population: 174; comparison with Classical Athens: 174 and n. 3; cf. Brauer 1986: 61. Large field army: Diod. 20.104.2.

143. Pervasive victory symbolism among Hellenistic Greek states: above, chap. 4, text at n. 15; at Rome: see below, chap. 6.

144. See Willeumier 1939: 377; Brauer 1986: 88 and 149.

bolic power.¹⁴⁵ In addition, the marketplace at Tarentum was dominated by an enormous bronze statue of Zeus the Thunderer by Lysippus himself (ca. 340 B.C.), sixty feet high and in the form of a warrior wielding a thunderbolt. The Romans thought it very fearsome—and other large and fearsome statues of warrior gods were grouped with it (Livy 27.16.8). Still extant is part of a large bronze statue of Ares (the Greek god of war)—in armor.¹⁴⁶ Much Tarentine private art also has warlike themes.¹⁴⁷

As with the discussions of the Etruscan cities and the Samnites above (the Celts are perhaps another matter), my point here is not that Tarentum was an exceptionally ferocious and militarized culture. My point is that Tarentum was (as the Etruscans were, as the Samnites were, and as Rome was also) an ordinarily ferocious and militarized culture of the ancient interstate anarchy. What we see in militarized Tarentum is, then, merely another case of the regression of states under the pressures of the harsh self-help regime of the anarchy toward a militaristic similarity of function and character.¹⁴⁸

The military power of Tarentum overawed other Italiotes and made Tarentum the champion of the Greeks against the highland peoples who were increasingly threatening them; under Archytas there were frequent Tarentine search-and-destroy operations into the hills. Already from about 420 the indigenous inhabitants, still unconquered by the Greeks, were being reinforced or conquered by the Lucanians and Bruttians—Italic peoples moving down the Apennines from Samnium. Archytas's offensive strategy against them paralleled the Tarentine strategy against the Messapians a century earlier, and paralleled the strategy that Rome eventually adopted against the Samnites. The only difference between Tarentum and Rome here was that Tarentum—although as strong as Classical Athens—was nevertheless not militarily strong enough to fulfill the strategy successfully.¹⁴⁹

Under this increasing highland pressure, Tarentine hegemony in south-

145. The Nike of Tarentum: Willeumier, 1939: 284. Augustus and this statue: Zankar 1990: 79–80. The Christian attempt to remove the statue from the Senate in 384 A.D. caused a furor: see the letter of Q. Aurelius Symmachus (*Rel.* 3).

146. The great statue of Zeus: Willeumier 1939: 281–82. The armored statue of Ares: 277, with plate IV: 5. On the great ferocity of the Greek deities associated with war, see now Deacy 2001: 285–98.

147. See Willeumier 1939: 299. A Tarentine frieze depicting Alexander slaughtering barbarians (ca. 300–280 B.C.): Calcane 1993: 31 and figure 6.

148. See Waltz 1979: 106–7.

149. Archytas's offensive strategy against the highlands: Willeumier 1939: 70–75 (with sources); cf. Raaflaub et al. 1992: 17. The brutal Tarentine invasion of Messapia in the 470s: above, n. 128.

ern Italy declined. By 355 Tarentum was under such heavy attack from the Lucanians that it could no longer protect the Italiote cities farther southwest against attacks from the Bruttians.¹⁵⁰ The situation eventually became so severe that the Tarentines called in warlords from European Greece for help: first King Archidamus III of Sparta (343–338), then King Alexander of Epirus (336–331). Alexander led successful offensive operations against the Messapians, Lucanians, Bruttians, and even the Samnites.¹⁵¹ Probably Alexander sought to create his own empire in southern Italy as the defender of the Greeks against the Italic peoples; but his efforts were hindered especially by hostility between Tarentum and Thurii, and in 331 he was assassinated.¹⁵² His death did not lead to new Italic pressure on the Greek cities, however—partly because of the military battering the highlanders had received, partly because from 327 the war between Rome and the Samnites drew Lucanian power toward the north (cf. Livy 8.27).

In the 320s Tarentine claims in Italy remained wide, as is shown by their effort in 326 to gain predominance at Naples, on the Campanian coast: Tarentum promised that its citizen army and its fleet would provide Naples protection against Rome, the Samnites, and the neighboring city of Nola. That the Neapolitans needed protection against so many different outsiders reveals with great force the anarchy of central Italy in the 320s.¹⁵³ The Tarentine fleet even intervened successfully in a civil war at Syracuse between 315 and 313.¹⁵⁴ And we should remember that even when led by foreigners such as Archidamus and Alexander, and backed by their mercenaries, the bulk of the Tarentine army doing the constant fighting against the hill peoples came from the Tarentine citizenry itself.¹⁵⁵ To be sure, the realities of power at the end of the fourth century sometimes damaged the wide Tarentine claims to hegemony: in the end Tarentum did not help Naples; and it failed to help Croton in 317 against Bruttian attack despite public promises to do so.¹⁵⁶ Tarentine influence depended on the ability of the army to defeat the Italic high-

150. See Willeumier 1939: 77–78 (with sources).

151. Again, Alexander's strategy of offensives into the hill country helps put the somewhat later but similar Roman strategy of taking the offensive into the Samnite hill country into context.

152. On Alexander, see Willeumier 1939: 81–88 (with sources).

153. Tarentum and Naples: Willeumier 1939: 70–71 (with sources); Raaflaub et al. 1992: 19.

154. See Brauer 1986: 75–77 (with sources).

155. On this point, see Brauer 1986: 61–62 (with sources).

156. See Raaflaub et al. 1992: 20 (with sources); Croton was eventually saved by Syracusan intervention.

landers, and after the end of the Roman war with the Samnites, in 304, Lucanian pressure became so powerful that the Tarentines again called upon Sparta for help. Prince Cleonymus came with a large mercenary force, in support of which the Tarentines mobilized twenty thousand citizen infantry and two thousand citizen cavalry (Diod. 20.104.2). The result was a successful offensive into the Lucanian highlands that served to reestablish for the moment Tarentine claims as the protector of Greek Italy.¹⁵⁷

The sparse evidence available for Tarentum in 370–300 B.C. thus shows the wide ambitions of the Tarentines, and their consistent employment of a strategy of offense against the hill peoples. But Tarentine ambitions and strategies, though not unusual, were unrealistic: their resources, large though they were for a city-state, were inadequate for dominion over southern Italy; the challenges were too great. The inadequacy of military resources was compounded by failure to create a stable hegemonic structure. Tarentum was not powerful enough to impose a hierarchical alliance system upon the Italiotes in the manner of Athens in fifth-century Greece, yet it also failed to create a cooperative and integrative league, such as the Achaeans and Aetolians did in Hellenistic Greece. Nothing in that direction was really attempted—and that is the measure of Tarentine political shortsightedness.

Thus Tarentum differed from Rome in organizational vision and ability—but it was as militaristic and diplomatically aggressive as Rome was. The citizen army remained strong; the government adapted to the increasing pressure from the Italic highlanders with a reasonable policy of hiring mercenaries to supplement citizen troops, and bringing in famous generals when severe crises with the Sabellians occurred (this should not be taken as a sign of decadence or lack of energy); the last half of the fourth century witnessed the erection of the great statues of Nike and Zeus the Thunderer in the city center. The wide claims of Tarentum show that Rome was not alone in Italy in making such claims—just alone in the capacity to enforce them.¹⁵⁸

157. The new Lucanian pressure and Cleonymus's expedition: Willeumier 1939: 94–96. The Tarentines later turned against Cleonymus because of his alleged tyrannical conduct (96).

158. Brauer (1986: 61–62, cf. 77) convincingly argues that the ancient tradition of Tarentine decadence after 350 is a false explanation for the use of mercenaries to supplement the Tarentine citizen army. This tradition is part of an ancient ideological polemic against mercenaries, in itself revealing the ancient critics' ideological position that war was a duty for all male citizens (an ideology, in turn, originating in response to the harsh interstate environment): see Polyb. 8.24.1; Strabo 6.3.4; Polyæn. 4.2.1.

The clash between Rome and Tarentum occurred when in the late 280s Roman wars with Samnites and Lucanians brought its influence into southern Italy. The founding in 291 of a large Latin colony at Venusia, on the borders of Lucania and Apulia to watch both Samnites and Lucanians, must have impressed the Italiotes—who had found Tarentum an unsteady champion against the highlanders. And the conflict, as so often, was precipitated by a third party. In 285 Thurii, under severe attack by Lucanians, asked Rome for help—not surprising, since the only alternative was Tarentum, and there was bitter enmity between the two cities. The Romans agreed to send aid: at first diplomatic (which failed), and then an army, which won a major victory against Lucanian forces (282). The Roman victory caused Locri, Croton, and other states to go over to Rome in order to gain protection against the hill peoples (perhaps for protection against Tarentum too); this was natural, for the Romans had demonstrable power and (equally important) a reputation for relatively mild treatment of allies.¹⁵⁹ The Italiote stance toward Rome is thus another example of Lundestad's empire by invitation—though, of course, it also required an aggressive decision at Rome to take these cities under protection.

Somewhat later, ten Roman warships anchored off Tarentum: their purpose is unclear, and the affair remains mysterious. But it was a violation of a Roman-Tarentine treaty from twenty years previously that forbade Roman warships from sailing into the Gulf of Tarentum. The Tarentine response was violent: their fleet sank half the Roman ships, and the army then marched on Thurii, took the city, looted it, and expelled its Roman garrison. This shows what the real issue was—the growing displacement of Tarentum as the hegemonic power of the southern coast. Cities as far away as Rhegium now feared Tarentine attack.¹⁶⁰ Rome does not appear to have been eager for full-scale war: with Celtic attacks in the north, and the Samnites and Lucanians restive in the south, the Senate was hesitant (cf. Dion. Hal. 19.6), and reacted slowly (cf. App. *Samn.* 7.3); opinion at Tarentum, too, was divided. But attempts to resolve the crisis short of war via the usual public diplomacy of compellence were—as so often in antiquity—unsuccessful: in a famous public

159. Cf. Raaflaub et al. 1992: 20. The Italiotes may have been impressed with Roman treatment of Greek Naples—which had received a treaty of alliance with such excellent terms that two hundred years later the Neapolitans preferred it to an offer of Roman citizenship: *ibid.*

160. Discussion of the Roman treaty violation and the Tarentine response: Willeumier 1939: 100–103 (with sources). These initial victories may have led the Tarentine government to issue new coinage with military and Nike symbolism: 103 and n. 3.

scene at Tarentum, stern Roman demands after the seizure of Thurii were met with brutal Tarentine insult.¹⁶¹

Faced now with this new and formidable enemy, the Tarentines again called for outside help from Greece, as they habitually had done over the previous fifty years. This time the aid came from Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, one of the great generals of the post-Alexander generation. In Italy Pyrrhus, like his ancestor Alexander of Epirus in the 330s, was probably seeking to create his own dynastic empire—in order to gather Italian resources against his formidable royal competitors in mainland Greece and the Greek East. He inflicted massive damage on the Romans, defeating them in two famous set-piece battles, sought to win over their allies by diplomacy or force—and in 280 came within two days' march of Rome itself.¹⁶² Roman losses were severe, and tradition said that after defeats in 280 the majority of the Senate was ready to accept a Tarentine-Epirote sphere of influence in southern Italy; only a dramatic speech by the elderly Appius Claudius Caecus convinced the *Patres* to fight on (Plut. *Pyrrh.* 18.4; App. *Samn.* 10.1).

Although the Romans were eventually victorious after a long struggle, the war with Pyrrhus constituted a permanent trauma in Roman memory, for the losses inflicted by Pyrrhus's Hellenistic army and its allies were immense. Moreover, this war was the first time the Roman Republic gained direct experience with a powerful state of mainland Greece—and the bitter lesson learned was that extraordinarily severe threats to Roman security could come from the Greek East, by means of invasion of Greek southern Italy. The Pyrrhic experience may therefore have had long-term impact in terms of senatorial views of the powers east of the Adriatic.¹⁶³ At the same time, we see in Appius Claudius Caecus's successful persuasion of the Senate not to make peace with Pyrrhus or Tarentum “as long as the enemy remains on the soil of Italy” an indication that already by 280 the Romans were claiming to be the overlords of the entire Italian peninsula.¹⁶⁴

161. Roman and Tarentine hesitation: see Willeumier 1939: 103–5 and Brauer 1986: 122 and 124–26 (with sources). The Tarentine insult, allegedly involving urination on the Roman ambassador: Willeumier, 103–4 (with sources). The story may have grown in the telling (see Barnes 2005), but Polyb. 1.6.3 shows that something very untoward occurred. Roman tradition held that the ambassador told the Tarentines that Rome's ultimate goal at Tarentum was not territorial or hegemonial aggrandizement (Dion. Hal. 19.5).

162. It is revealing of the nature of the Romans' world in this period that in 283 an invasion by Celts from the north had gotten to within forty miles of the city—while in 280 an invading Greek army came so close from the south.

163. Discussion: Seibert 1995: 237–38.

164. See the comments of Cornell 1995: 364. A version of Appius Claudius's famous speech was still available in Cicero's time: see *Sen.* 16; *Brut.* 61.

This war lasted nine years (281–272 B.C.). The Tarentine forces fought continually and well. The idea of Tarentine decadence is belied by the inscription of Pyrrhus at the shrine of Dodona in Epirus, attributing his first victories over Rome to himself, the Epirotes, and the Tarentines, and the Tarentine dedication at Delphi, honoring the Tarentine cavalry general at the victorious battle of Heraclea (280), inscribed: “From the city of the Tarentines, which fights on horseback.” After Heraclea we also get an issue of Tarentine coinage with Nike crowning Taras.¹⁶⁵ Large numbers of Tarentine citizen troops participated in every major battle (supplemented with mercenaries hired at the city’s expense). When Pyrrhus departed Italy for two years to attempt the conquest of Sicily (277–276), the Tarentines did not collapse—though Roman armies ravaged their territory. And for the decisive campaign of Beneventum in 275 the Tarentines contributed their best and most courageous citizen troops (Plut. *Pyrrh.* 24.4); it is at Rome that we hear of resistance to conscription at this point.¹⁶⁶ Even after defeat at Beneventum and Pyrrhus’s final departure from Italy, Tarentum held out against Rome for three more years; and the city fell only when an Epirote general left behind by Pyrrhus betrayed it to the besieging Roman army. In all this, the Tarentines remained true to their own sternly militaristic tradition.¹⁶⁷

The Roman victory meant the end of Tarentine hegemony in southern Italy. The city was forced to become an ally of Rome, tear down its landward wall, and receive a Roman garrison in its citadel. But Tarentine military tradition did not disappear. Tarentine warships fought for Rome during the First Punic War (Polyb. 1.20.14), and the city furnished land forces as well (cf. Livy 24.13.1).¹⁶⁸ In midcentury we still find armored cavalymen on Tarentine coinage. Perhaps this shows the type of contribution made by Tarentum to the Roman army; if it is merely an advertisement for Tarentine cavalry as mercenaries, this still shows the persistence of the Tarentine military tradition.¹⁶⁹

And Tarentine hostility and rivalry toward Rome continued. The city defected to Hannibal in 214, an event that had great impact all over southern Italy: after it, we find Thurii, Metapontum, Heraclea, and many Lu-

165. Dodona and Delphi: Willeumier 1939: 116–17. The post-Heraclea coinage: 117 and n. 5.

166. Livy *Per.* 14; Val. Max. 4.3.4, with Willeumier 1939: 134.

167. See Brauer 1986: 144, 149–50, 156, 160. Compare, e.g., Garoufalios 1979: 56: “the pampered merchants had no intention of abandoning their ephemeral pleasures,” etc. Milon’s surrender of the city in 272: see esp. Front. *Strat.* 3.3.1.

168. See Willeumier 1939: 133–44.

169. On this coinage: Brauer 1986: 175–78.

canians all going over to Hannibal.¹⁷⁰ The treaty with Hannibal guaranteed that Tarentum would no longer have to take orders from anyone (Polyb. 8.25.1–2; Livy 25.8.8). Polybius notes the energy with which the Tarentines engaged in their own defense (8.34[36].10). Hannibal installed a garrison to protect the city from the Romans, but even after most of the Hannibalic garrison had departed the Tarentines held out, despite heavy losses (Livy 26.39). They defeated the Romans at sea in 210 (ibid.)—and issued coinage with a laureled anchor in celebration. A beligerently phrased inscription announced that the victory would henceforth be commemorated in an annual festival dedicated to the gods.¹⁷¹ But celebration was short-lived. In 209 the famous general Q. Fabius Maximus, consul for the fifth time, besieged the city. Hannibal, too, sent reinforcements. As in 272, Tarentum was again betrayed to Rome—and again by a foreigner, one of Hannibal's Bruttian officers. Yet even now many Tarentines did not surrender: the last fierce stand of Tarentine military tradition occurred in the center of the city; Nikon and Democrates, the leading Tarentine generals, died fighting in the battle line. In the end the Tarentines were overwhelmed, and the city sacked. The loot was tremendous, and included (it appears) thirty thousand Tarentine citizens sold as slaves.¹⁷²

Tarentum never recovered economically or demographically. Although the Senate granted the survivors local autonomy (these included numbers of people who had remained loyal to Rome in 214–209, and had gone into exile), Tarentum after 209 became a backwater. Its place as the economic center of southern Italy was taken by the Latin colony at Brundisium. But it should be clear from the above account, and despite its brutal ending, that the long conflict that began in the mid-280s was between two expansionist and militarist powers.¹⁷³

CARTHAGE

In the last half of the third century B.C. Rome's great rival and enemy was the city-state of Carthage in North Africa; their wars shook the entire western Mediterranean. If we examine Carthaginian society and culture as well as the trend of Punic external policies, it is clear that Carthage was not a polity of mostly peaceful merchants victimized by aggressive

170. Ibid. 190–91.

171. On the inscription and the triumphant coinage: Willeumier 1939: 159 and n. 4.

172. The fall of the city: ibid. 160–65 (with sources).

173. History of Tarentum after the sack of 209: Brauer 1986: 201–9.

Romans—though prominent modern scholars have often presented it that way.¹⁷⁴

The early history of Carthage is imperfectly known, but some aspects stand out. The city was founded later than the other Phoenician colonies in the West, with colonists from Tyre in Lebanon seizing the magnificent North African harbor about 820 B.C. Thus Carthage did not inherit its hegemony over the other Phoenician colonies achieved by roughly 550. Rather, though a late starter, it won its way to domination through the will power and energies of its people, and through the organizational weaknesses and division of the other western Punic city-states. The Carthaginians also seized the immediate hinterland of the city from its indigenous Libyan inhabitants.¹⁷⁵ For a long time the Carthaginian elite did indeed focus on long-range overseas commerce. But peaceableness should not be exaggerated. The Mediterranean in the Archaic age was a place where even supposedly friendly merchants were assumed to be potential pirates, and possible Carthaginian raiding is a major concern in the two earliest treaties between Carthage and Rome, from around 509 and 348 B.C.¹⁷⁶

Nor was Carthage averse to official military expansion. Between 540 and 500 B.C., in a series of bitter wars fought at sea, the Punic Republic drove Greek fleets from coastal Spain, Corsica, Sardinia, and western Sicily.¹⁷⁷ The western Mediterranean coast became dotted with Punic strongholds and naval bases. Apparently the Carthaginians did not at first seek a trade monopoly from this situation; there were even communities of Greek traders at Carthage itself. What they sought—and widely achieved—was control. The Punic state strictly regulated foreign trade in all areas of hegemony (Polyb. 2.22.8), taxed it, and granted trading rights in various seaports as acts of political favor.¹⁷⁸

Carthage was first called into Sicily by Phoenician city-states in western Sicily, such as Motya, which were coming under increasing military pressure from the Greeks; they had their own armies, but were smaller than the Greek colonies in the eastern part of the island, whose populations were constantly reinforced from home: to prevent being over-

174. See Thiel 1954: esp. 129–34; Mitchell 1971: esp. 334–44; Jones 1972: 27–29; Harris 1979: 182–94, 200–205, and 234–40; Oakley 1993: 33; Lazenby 1996: 39–48, esp. 42.

175. Whittaker 1978: 59; also Lancel 1992: chap. 3.

176. Polyb. 3.22.10–11 and 24.9. Link between trading and piracy: see Thuc. 1.5.2; cf. de Souza 1999: 22–25.

177. Discussion: Hoffmann 1972: 344–48.

178. Whittaker 1978: 81–82, with sources.

whelmed, they needed outside help from a state with power. Thus in 410 Segesta “put itself into the hands of Carthage” in return for protection (Diod. 13.43.3–4). This, of course, was a process typical of the ancient world.¹⁷⁹ Perhaps originally the Carthaginian hegemony in western Sicily was rather loose, with towns having some independence but dependent upon Punic military power for survival, and viewing Carthage as their champion—whom it would be unwise to cross.¹⁸⁰ But our information is very scanty, and when ancient sources tell us so little even about the government of Carthage itself, their silence about Punic administration overseas should not be treated as clear evidence of absence.¹⁸¹

After 500 B.C. the Carthaginians began attempts to conquer Greek Sicily. There were five great campaigns: in 480; in 410–392; again in 360; again in 311–310; again in 278. The Carthaginians eventually failed at the conquest, and C. R. Whittaker sees this as indicating an only halfhearted commitment to expansionism.¹⁸² Yet all these expeditions were large and costly. The fighting of 410–392, which saw the Punic destruction of the Greek cities of Selinus, Himera, and Acragas (Agrigentum), was ferocious. And Whittaker is wrong to doubt that it was plague that aborted the great Punic siege of Syracuse in 396 (so Diod. 14.70.4)—positing an odd lack of interest instead; the city was surrounded by unhealthy marshes, and we know that in 212 a similar plague wiped out another threatening Punic army, including both commanders.¹⁸³ It was not the will to conquer that was missing at Carthage (see Diod. 13.80.1, emphatically), but—simply—sufficient power. The presence of a brilliant Punic general, or of Greek military incompetence, might have changed the situation—but neither appeared. What is remarkable is that despite the expensive series of setbacks, the Punic government persisted in its attempts at conquering the Greek eastern half of the island.

Throughout this period the champion of Greek Sicily against Carthage was the large city-state of Syracuse, and after 410 the Syracusans began

179. The worsening situation for the Phoenician towns in the face of the Greek threat: *ibid.* 64. The parallel with Teanum and Capua, Capua and Rome, or Thurii and Rome is obvious.

180. So Whittaker 1978: 64–88.

181. Our sparse knowledge about Punic state institutions: Lancel 1992: 110. Diod. 15.15.1 describes the polities of western Sicily in the 380s as allies of Carthage (14.48.4)—yet Thucydides can refer to the Carthaginian empire (*ἀρχή*) on the island (6.90.2).

182. Whittaker 1978: 68.

183. The plague of 212: Livy 25.26.7–27.1, probably from Polybius: see Eckstein 1987: 158–59.

their own periodic attempts to conquer the Punic western part of the island. In attempting these mutual offensives, perhaps both sides were motivated partly by deep security concerns (cf. Diod. 13.112.1–2). Yet Syracuse was never able to wield the other Greek city-states into a stable alliance, let alone a real confederation, because the other Greek polities feared the hegemony of Syracuse as much as they feared the Carthaginians. The result of this political failure to master the Greek city-state world was that the governments at Syracuse never gained the resources of force necessary to expel Carthage from the island, despite making periodic destructive attempts to do so.¹⁸⁴

From about 400 B.C. one can detect a change in Carthaginian hegemony. In western Sicily, our Greek sources cease to speak merely of hegemony (*hēgemonia*) and now generally use terms that stress power and control (*epikratia* or *eparchia*).¹⁸⁵ In Punic-controlled areas along the North African coast and in Sardinia and southern Spain, trade is now transformed into a Carthaginian monopoly—though at Carthage itself and in Sicily the older system, with foreign merchants present but under supervision, continues (Polyb. 3.24.11–12). There is also a huge expansion of the Punic land empire in North Africa via wars of conquest. Perhaps this is partly a response to devastating Libyan attacks in the 370s (see Diod. 15.24.2–3).¹⁸⁶ A real provincial system followed, with heavy taxes, district officials, and governors.¹⁸⁷ In 300 B.C. the territory of the Punic state was in fact far larger than the contemporary *ager Romanus* in Italy, and rivaled the sum of the territory of Rome and all its allies combined; moreover, it included some of the richest agricultural lands in the Mediterranean—the Medjerda Valley, stretching for over a hundred miles southwest from Carthage. This was a source of power indeed.¹⁸⁸ To impose control, the Punic government set up a system of garrison settlements as far as 120 miles west and southwest of Carthage—not unlike the Roman military colonies and Tarentine military colonies we have noted as instruments of state power above. Meanwhile, the important

184. Great Syracusan ambitions, 410–210 B.C.: Hoffmann 1972: 352–53. In terms of the thesis of Walt 1987, the Syracusans failed because the other Greek states never believed that Syracuse was a less threatening power than Carthage, and thus could not be convinced to join with it.

185. See Plato *Ep.* 7.349c; Diod. 13.81.1; Polyb. 1.15.10 and 17.1, 3.24.8 and 12, with Whittaker 1978: 62.

186. Note that the Carthaginian town of Kerkuanē, on the east side of Cape Bon, already in the fifth century has a double defensive wall facing inland: Lancel 1992: 266–69.

187. See Charles-Picard 1966: 1257–66; and now Lancel 1992: 273–76.

188. See the comments of Lancel 1992: 269–70.

Phoenician city-states in Libya, 250 miles to the east, were now paying Carthage annual tribute.¹⁸⁹

One consequence of the territorial expansion into the hinterland was a spectacular growth in large landholding by the Punic aristocracy. By 250 B.C. the huge estates of Hanno the Great were alleged to have required the toil of twenty thousand slaves (Justin 21.4.6); we do not have to believe this number, but the general scale tells the story. And the family of Hannibal himself was no different: they owned vast olive plantations sixty miles southeast of Carthage (Livy 33.48.1; Plin. *NH* 17.93). The Carthaginian aristocracy had always been great landowners, not mere city-dwelling merchants, as is proven by the famous fifth-century agricultural manual authored by Mago; now they came into possession of even larger estates—the spoils of conquest by Carthaginian armies.¹⁹⁰

This transformation of the Punic empire probably resulted primarily from the need to accumulate more resources and to intensify control over them in the face of the struggle with powerful and ambitious Syracuse—as well as intensified problems in Africa. That is, the expansive Punic “new imperialism” was a response to increasing pressures from the interstate environment.¹⁹¹ Syracusan attacks on Punic Sicily at the end of the fifth century indicated that a new strategic balance had arisen, and warfare swayed back and forth across the island for the next 150 years. At Syracuse such pressures led to the rise of the dictator Dionysius I and his successors.¹⁹² The wars even included the invasion of Punic Africa by the Syracusan dictator Agathocles in 310–308, in an attempt to seize Carthage itself. The Carthaginians for their part periodically attempted the conquest of Syracuse (see above). In the early 270s the Syracusans, again under severe pressure from Carthage, called in Pyrrhus of Epirus (busy in Italy as an ally of Tarentum against the Romans). Pyrrhus’s forces almost expelled Punic power from Sicily—but the Carthaginians struck back hard. The deep concern over security at Carthage in this period is shown by an intensification in the practice of infant sacrifice; twenty thousand urns of human bones have been discovered.¹⁹³ The intensification of Punic methods of control over dependent polities and the expansion

189. Military colonies and tribute: *ibid.* 158–59.

190. On the enormous North African landholdings of the Punic aristocracy, note also the general statement at Diod. 14.77.5; and see Whittaker 1978: 88–89. On Mago and Punic landholding, see Lancel 1992: 273–80.

191. Whittaker 1978: 60 and 88–90.

192. Dionysius, as we have seen above, also had large ambitions for Syracuse in Greek southern Italy.

193. Lancel 1992: 248–51; cf. Goldsworthy 2000: 26–27.

of the land empire in Africa are other symptoms of the pressure. The harsh transformations in imperial administration led, in turn, to a new hatred of Carthage both by its indigenous Libyan subjects and by its dependent allies.¹⁹⁴

Thus a new, sterner Carthaginian attitude toward empire and territorial expansion, fueled by both ambition and fear, had emerged just when the expanding Roman Republic appeared on the Punic horizon. Further, one should dismiss the idea that the Punic aristocracy was ever unwarlike. The founding document asserting that the Punic aristocracy were only clever merchants interested in profit and afraid of war (which long played into modern anti-Semitic stereotypes) is Cicero *De Republica* 2.4.7—a passage now widely thought by scholars to be aimed at reform of Roman society itself in the first century B.C.¹⁹⁵ Wealth was clearly of great importance to the Carthaginian aristocracy: no one denies it (see Arist. *Pol.* 1273a; Polyb. 6.56.1–2). But Polybius praises this same aristocracy for its “noble manliness” during the most desperate military crises of the third century (1.31.8).¹⁹⁶

The idea that the Punic aristocracy was unwarlike is untrue at any time, and especially untrue of our period. Carthage did depend in good part on foreign mercenaries for its army and its fleet, because its own citizen body was relatively small. But Punic citizen armies fought with valor against Agathocles of Syracuse in 310–308, against M. Atilius Regulus in 256/255, against their own mercenaries when they rebelled in 241–238, and—sometimes—against P. Cornelius Scipio in 204–201.¹⁹⁷ As for the aristocracy, the cruelty with which Punic generals conducted their warfare—including the mass slaughter of civilians in captured cities—was famous.¹⁹⁸ In the sixth century the great general Mago was the dominant figure in Punic politics precisely because of his battlefield accomplishments, which had increased Carthaginian power (Justin 18.19). In the fifth century the general Hamilcar was the leading figure at Carthage because of his “manly valor” (Justin 19.1.1). In the fourth century Carthage possessed an elite fighting regiment (the Sacred Band)

194. See Polyb. 1.72.1–5, cf. 1.82.8 and Diod. 20.55.4.

195. See Whittaker 1978: 87; Wood 1988: 117–19.

196. Polybius and Punic *andreia*: Eckstein 1995: 62–63.

197. Agathocles: Diod. 20; Regulus: Polyb. 1.32–36; victories over the mercenaries under desperate conditions: Polyb. 1.66–88; against Scipio's invasion: see Eckstein 1987: chap. VIII.

198. See Diod. 13.57.2–6 (discussed in detail in chap. 6 below); 13.62; 14.46.2; Polyb. 1.11.5; App. *Pun.* 24; Plut. *Mor.* 799D; Zon. 8.11 and 17. Good discussion in Erskine 2000: 170 and nn. 20–21.

drawn solely from the scions of the aristocracy (Diod. 16.80.4), and so many Punic nobles were lost with a shipwrecked war fleet on its way to besiege Syracuse in 311 that the city was draped in black (19.106.1–4). In the third century Hamilcar Barca (“the Thunderbolt”) was not only an outstanding general but also a formidable warrior in the battle line.¹⁹⁹ Hamilcar’s son Hannibal also fought personally in the battle line (3.17.6 and 116.3–4). One of Hannibal’s generals was a Punic aristocrat whose nickname was Monomachus—the lover of single combat; he was a man whose reputation for bloodthirstiness was ferocious.²⁰⁰

Roman aristocratic culture was intensely warlike (as we will see); but given the above, one may doubt that Carthaginian nobles found Roman aristocratic culture outrageously warlike. Mago, Hamilcar Barca, and Hannibal did not come out of nowhere—and neither did the fearsome Sacred Band. My point, once more, is not to paint Carthage as an exceptionally militaristic or aggressive Mediterranean state. Rather, Carthage was a normally militaristic and aggressive Mediterranean state, its aggressiveness evolving in good part out of the pressures of the anarchic Mediterranean environment.²⁰¹

There is a vast literature on the conflict that eventually arose in the western Mediterranean between Carthage and Rome. We can trace here only the elements of the struggle relevant to our theme: Were the Carthaginians passive and inoffensive victims of a ruthless Roman imperialism?

The catalyst for the first war was the city-state of Messina, at the straits dividing Sicily from Italy. Campanian mercenaries of the Syracusan dictator Agathocles had seized the town around 285; these mercenaries—the “Men of Mars” (Mamertines)—thereafter created a small empire in the northeast. But in the mid-260s the new Syracusan dictator Hiero II defeated them, and in 264 they called upon both Rome and Carthage for protection from destruction. The Carthaginians answered by putting a Punic garrison into Messina, and managed to drive the Syracusans away without starting a war. This was an aggressive Punic move in the old struggle with Syracuse: the Carthaginians had never penetrated into north-

199. Punic militarism in the sixth through fourth centuries: Whittaker 1978: 87; Polybius on Hamilcar Barca: Eckstein 1995: 34–35 and 43–44.

200. See Polyb. 9.24.5–8 and Livy 23.5.12–13; the latter passage may be exaggerated, but the former passage is formidable enough. See Hoyos 2003: 107 and n. 18.

201. For Carthage as an ordinary Mediterranean city-state with ordinary intense militarism, not a commercial state dominated by merchants, see rightly Ameling 1993: esp. 180–81.

eastern Sicily before, though perhaps they had recently seized the Lipari Islands, off the northern coast (Diod. 22.13.7). But the Romans, too, responded positively to the Mamertine appeal against Syracuse. As Campanians at a time when many Campanians were being integrated into the Roman state (see below, chapter 6), as fellow fighters against King Pyrrhus (as was Carthage)—and as possessors of a city controlling the strategic straits between Italy and Sicily—the Mamertines could make a good case for Roman protection.²⁰²

In deciding to protect the Mamertines, Rome—like Carthage—was risking conflict with Syracuse. But that war in Sicily with Syracuse and/or Carthage was the most likely result of this decision, or even—as W. V. Harris has argued—the result desired by the Roman government, is hard to accept.²⁰³ Rome possessed no war fleet and was not prepared for war over an island.²⁰⁴ And Roman relations with Syracuse (as with Carthage) were relatively friendly (see Zon. 8.6), so an intervention at Messana need not have meant war; after all, the Carthaginians—whose relations with Syracuse were bitterly hostile—had been able to end the Syracusan threat to Messana without one.

It is sometimes asserted, however, that the Roman intervention at Messana violated a treaty with Carthage that restricted Rome to Italy as it restricted Carthage to Sicily. This would make the Roman decision of 264 aggressive indeed.²⁰⁵ Enemies of the Romans could certainly make a case that sometimes Rome violated treaties: we saw an example with Tarentum about 281.²⁰⁶ A treaty restricting Rome to Italy as it restricted Carthage to Sicily was claimed to exist by the pro-Punic historian Philinus of Agrigentum, and Roman tradition indeed accepted its existence—asserting, however, that Carthage broke the treaty first, by the appearance of a Punic war fleet off Tarentum in 272 while Rome was besieging it. But the Greek historian Polybius, after an extensive search, found no such treaty in the Roman archives, and he therefore concluded that Philinus's treaty was in fact Punic propaganda that had duped him (3.26). Since the Roman tradition both before and after Polybius was that Carthage had broken the treaty first, Polybius is likely to be correct—for in a situation where the Romans believed that Carthage

202. See Eckstein 1987: 75–80. Rome may also have had previous good relations with Mamertine Messana: see Zon. 8.6 for an agreement of ca. 270.

203. Harris 1979: 182–89.

204. See Hoyos 1998: 19–20, against Harris 1979: 183.

205. So, e.g., Thiel 1954: 129–34; Harris 1979: 188; Lancel 1993: 363–65.

206. See text above at n. 160.

had broken the treaty first, there would have been no reason for a patriotic Roman to remove the “embarrassing” treaty from the archives (which some scholars have suggested occurred); on the contrary: there was every reason for the Romans to display and highlight it. Indeed, so advantageous to them was the Roman version of events in terms of propaganda that Polybius’s finding that no such treaty existed in the archives had no impact on the Roman tradition—which continued to assert its existence. The conclusion: Roman intervention at Messana was an assertive act, seeking strategic advantage—the same as with the Punic intervention—but it did not violate any treaty, for such a treaty never existed. Rather, the tradition on the “treaty” was a product of later debates and propaganda over the rightness or wrongness of the war.²⁰⁷

The Mamertines preferred Roman protection to that of Carthage, and got the Punic garrison to leave the city peacefully. With that, the Romans could hope to have established hegemony at Messana while avoiding war—as the Carthaginians had just done.²⁰⁸ The situation was transformed by the harsh response of Carthage and Syracuse to the success of Roman diplomacy.²⁰⁹ The Punic government dispatched a large force to Sicily—and then formed an alliance with Syracuse against Messana and Rome. This unprecedented alliance may be an indication of the fear that Rome inspired. Or perhaps each side saw an unprecedented opportunity to change the Sicilian political world to its advantage (Carthage securing influence in northeastern Sicily, Syracuse securing undisturbed control over eastern Sicily?). The two allies, who still greatly distrusted each other (Diod. 23.3.1), besieged Messana. The Romans made attempts to end the siege peacefully. But the clash of interests was real: the Romans demanded that the siege be lifted; the assertiveness of the Punic attitude is shown by the Carthaginian commander’s famous insult: “If the Romans do not maintain friendship with Carthage, they will not be allowed even to wash their hands in the sea.” Negotiations—or rather, mutual compellence diplomacy—failed (as so often in antiq-

207. For the argument against historicity of the treaty, see Walbank 1957: 354; Badian 1979: 169 and n. 14; Eckstein 1987: 77–79; and esp. Hoyos 1985: 91–109, cf. Hoyos 1998: 9–11.

208. The peaceful departure of the Punic garrison in favor of Rome is a striking sign of the ambiguity of diplomatic circumstances in 264—and further proof as well of the nonexistence of the Treaty of Philinus.

209. A point often missed, but see rightly Heuss 1949: 480.

uity).²¹⁰ A Roman army then managed to cross the straits into Messana and drove off Hiero II's troops, and then those of Carthage.

In 263 the Senate sent both consuls to besiege Syracuse—an indication of who the Romans believed their main opponent to be.²¹¹ The great scale of the Roman effort—perhaps forty thousand troops—led most of the city-states of eastern Sicily to go over to the Romans.²¹² Hiero II, having received no help from his Carthaginian allies, eventually submitted as well, entering into a treaty of peace and friendship. He faithfully abided by this relationship with Rome until his death in 215; during this period Syracuse enjoyed unprecedented peace and prosperity. But the price was abandonment of traditional Syracusan aims to be the hegemonic power in eastern Sicily. That role now belonged to Rome.²¹³

The Carthaginian governing elite, however, viewed the establishment of Roman dominance in eastern Sicily as intolerable. Punic troops poured into the island, and Punic warships began raiding the coasts of Italy. A Roman victory at Agrigentum in 262 evidently expanded Roman ambitions as well—from protecting Greek Sicily to driving Carthage from Sicily altogether; meanwhile the Romans responded to Punic naval raids on Italy by building their first war fleet. Once the spiral of escalation reached this stage, the clash of interests became deadly: Carthage had not permitted the existence of a rival at sea for 250 years, whereas the Punic naval raids, combined with Roman successes in Sicily, convinced the Senate both of the dangers that Carthage represented and of the opportunity being offered to be totally secure in the south.²¹⁴

The war itself became a bloody struggle that lasted twenty-four years, on a huge scale (as emphasized by Polyb. 1.63.4–9); losses among Roman citizens and allies were enormous, especially at sea. The fiercely stubborn commitment of both antagonists is clear (Polyb. 1.58.7–9). In the end the Carthaginians gave up when their financial and military resources were totally exhausted (and those of Rome almost as exhausted)—but not, Polybius emphasizes, the Punic will to fight (1.62.1). The peace treaty

210. On the complex efforts to end the Punic and Syracusan siege of Messana peaceably, see Eckstein 1987: 93–101. The Carthaginian insult: Diod. 23.2.1; Dio frg. 43.8–9, cf. Zon. 8.9.

211. Cf. Heuss 1949: 481.

212. On these communities, see Eckstein 1987: 103–15.

213. On the relationship Rome established with Hiero, see Eckstein 1980: 175–90.

214. On how a diplomatic conflict over Messana primarily between Rome and Syracuse escalated into a deadly war between Rome and Carthage, see esp. Heuss 1949: 457–513.

of 241 mandated that Carthage evacuate Sicily and pay Rome a large war indemnity.

For three years after 241 relations were stable. The Carthaginians during this period faced a grave postwar rebellion from their own mercenary troops, and the city itself came close to falling. That Carthage went from being an imperial power in 245 to the verge being destroyed by its own mercenary army in 240 is another indication of the great fragility of the security of even the most powerful states in this period—a fragility of security that elites understood, and that explains much that was negative in state interaction. But the Romans actually helped Carthage to survive: Italian merchants were caught trading with the rebel mercenaries, but were released at Roman request; in response the Senate strictly forbade the trade, and released three thousand Carthaginian aristocratic hostages being held by Rome to guarantee the peace treaty: these men helped form the core of the army that eventually defeated the mercenaries. The Senate also refused the plea of the North African cities in rebellion against Carthage to come under Roman protection. As Polybius puts it, Rome in these years was “faithfully observing the treaty of peace” (1.83.11).

But Roman policy changed sharply in 238/237. The Senate, which previously had rejected a plea for protection from mercenaries on Sardinia rebelling from Carthage, accepted a second plea from them, for protection against an indigenous Sardinian rebellion. Sardinia and Corsica were now claimed by Rome; Roman forces occupied the islands against fierce indigenous resistance (which would last decades); and when the Senate learned that Carthage, finally victorious against the mercenaries in Africa, was itself preparing to retake the islands, it not only forced the Carthaginian government to give up this project on pain of war but greatly increased the Punic war indemnity (see Polyb. 1.88).

The peace of 241 had been controversial at Rome as too mild; war-weariness had led to its acceptance (Polyb. 1.62–63). In 238/237 the Senate rectified the situation by seizing Sardinia and Corsica. Control of the large islands created a barrier reef against Carthaginian naval attacks on Italy should there be hostilities again and hindered possible Punic co-operation with the Celts of the Po Valley, who by 238 were putting strong new pressure on the northern frontier (see above). The *Patres* may have convinced themselves that their action did not violate the peace of 241, on grounds that by 238/237 no one had a valid claim to Sardinia and Corsica: Carthage had not controlled the islands for four years, nor were the anti-Punic mercenaries in control, because of the successful indige-

nous rebellion.²¹⁵ But if the men in the Senate convinced themselves that they were doing no wrong to Carthage, no one else took that view. Polybius bluntly calls the Roman action a theft (3.30.4)—and that was certainly the Carthaginian position, though the Punic government had no choice but to give in at the time.²¹⁶

The Carthaginian response to the catastrophes of 241–237 could have been to restrict themselves to their large African holdings; if they had, then the history of the western Mediterranean might well have been different.²¹⁷ Instead, the Punic government gathered the resources to pursue the rivalry with Rome on a large scale. In 237 it sent Hamilcar Barca—a hero of the First Punic War, and the man who had defeated the mercenaries—to create a new territorial empire for Carthage in Spain. Gaining control of Spain's silver mines and its military manpower through conquest and/or forced alliances with the indigenous tribes would help rectify the asymmetry between the military resources of Rome and those of Carthage. Polybius believes the Sardinia crisis brought on the second war, for Hamilcar Barca's personal bitterness about the Roman victory of 241 now gained the support of the general populace for revenge (3.10.4–5); certainly without popular support the Spanish project could not have begun. In the ancient Mediterranean, to take vengeance for a perceived wrong was normal and acceptable state action—not merely for the sake of honor (though that was an important cultural motif), but because restored status led to better security.²¹⁸

The Spanish project shows the vigor with which the Carthaginians, undaunted, sought the resources to be a great power. They sought it through violence. Hamilcar's wars accomplished much in Spain before his death in battle in winter 229/228. Conquest went slower under his son-in-law Hasdrubal (who nevertheless founded the capital of New Carthage on the eastern coast), but was then renewed with spectacular success by Hamilcar's son Hannibal from 221. Money and men: these were the sinews of power. The result was that while the Punic armies of the first war were drawn mostly from North African allies supplemented by large numbers of mercenaries, in the second war Carthage needed

215. Interesting discussion in Carey 1996.

216. On Polybius's view of the Sardinia crisis, which demonstrates his objectivity toward Roman policies, see Eckstein 1995: 102.

217. See Rich 1996: 3.

218. On revenge as a motive for state action in the Greek world, see Lendon 2000. On the practical benefits of vengeance taking in an interstate anarchy, see above, chap. 3. Polybius thought the Carthaginians' attempt to take revenge perfectly reasonable: 3.30.2.

somewhat fewer mercenaries, drawing many soldiers from the Hispanic peoples over whom it had established hegemony.²¹⁹

But successful Punic empire building in Spain attracted Roman attention. It is likely that already in 231 the Senate sent an embassy to investigate Hamilcar's activity (Dio frg. 48).²²⁰ Sometime in 228/226 senatorial envoys arranged a treaty with Hasdrubal, under which the Carthaginians agreed on the Ebro River as the northern limit of Punic military expansion in Spain.²²¹ Polybius connects the Ebro treaty to Roman concern about the Celts, who were on the verge of a new invasion of central Italy (2.13.3–7). Another probable sign of growing Roman concern over Carthage in this period was the creation of Sicily and Sardinia-Corsica in 227 as permanent provinces with garrisons.²²²

Rome had now emerged from the series of increasingly larger anarchic state-systems in Italy, in which it had so long been involved, into the still larger world of the western Mediterranean; and its victory in the First Punic War had immediately established Rome as the most important power in the larger system. But viewed as a single interstate system, the western Mediterranean from the mid-230s was in fact undergoing a shift in the balance of power. The extraordinary expansion of the Punic empire in Spain was a new and growing factor in the geopolitical situation, and it interacted with the new and serious Celtic pressure on Rome's northern frontier. The result was to alter the strategic equation, to alter the distribution of power across the system—to Rome's detriment. This had a powerful impact on the crisis that developed between Rome and Carthage after 220.

The immediate cause of the second war was Roman protection of the coastal town of Saguntum, which lay a hundred miles south of the Ebro. Was this Roman action a violation of the Ebro treaty? The Romans may have offered concessions in the Ebro treaty regarding other areas in order to get the Ebro limit on Carthaginian military activity (we simply do not know). But in terms of Spain itself the treaty was evidently not reciprocal (i.e., restrictive on both sides), nor did it demarcate at the Ebro impermeable general spheres of influence, as some scholars hold; the issue was solely a limit on the Punic military. This is why Carthaginian commercial and diplomatic activity in fact continued north of the Ebro

219. See the examination of Ameling 1993: 183–225.

220. Historicity: see Eckstein 1984: 56.

221. Sources on the Ebro treaty: Schmitt 1969: no. 503. Its somewhat uncertain date: Rich 1996: 23.

222. See Eckstein 1987: 112–15; cf. Rich 1996: 23–24.

after the swearing of the treaty as before, and included the striking of friendships with important tribes. And Punic commercial and diplomatic activity north of the Ebro was paralleled by Rome's friendship with Saguntum south of the Ebro.²²³ It is this ambiguous political situation that is the immediate background to the crisis of 220–218 B.C. over Saguntum.²²⁴

The Roman friendship with Saguntum postdates the peace of 241, since Saguntum was not included under its terms (Polyb. 3.21.1–5). It may date from the Roman embassy of 231 (see above). That it already existed in Hamilcar's time is indicated in the text of Polybius (3.14.9–10) where Hamilcar is depicted (from a Punic source) as advising Hannibal not to interfere with Saguntum until all the rest of Spain is under Barcid control.²²⁵ Moreover, in the actual crisis over Saguntum, the Romans' right to have the town as an *amicus* is not questioned—only Hannibal's right to launch an attack on it. Thus in the interview between senatorial envoys and Hannibal at New Carthage in autumn 220, Hannibal criticizes the unfairness of Roman arbitration of internal disputes at Saguntum—but not the Roman right to do it (Polyb. 3.15.7); and in the diplomacy at Carthage in 218 the issue was whether Hannibal had violated the peace of 241 by attacking and destroying a friend of Rome that was not included in the original list of polities immune from attack under the peace—not the Romans' right to have that friend (3.21.1–5).²²⁶

Nevertheless, Roman actions at Saguntum in the late 220s had a strong anti-Punic aura in a region far south of the Ebro, just a few years after the establishment by Roman demand of a limit on Carthaginian military activity in Spain at the Ebro itself. The Saguntines clearly sought Roman protection against rapidly expanding Punic power, and to some extent received it. The relationship with Rome, though informal, was the only way for Saguntum to avoid submission to Carthage. It caused division in the city, which led (with Roman involvement) to the expulsion of a group that advocated accommodation with the Barcids (Polyb. 3.15.7 and 30.1: 222 B.C.?). Somewhat later, Saguntum became involved in a

223. The relationship was one of informal friendship, not a sworn treaty of alliance: Badian 1957: 48–51 (fundamental).

224. Probable terms of the Ebro treaty: see Badian 1979: 161–64; cf. Eckstein 1984: 57–62. The important Punic commercial and diplomatic activity north of the Ebro after 228/226: Rodríguez Adrados 1946: esp. 167–73. Non-Polybian sources claim that Saguntum received special mention and exemption under the treaty, but this is Roman apologia: see rightly Rich 1996: 5 and n. 14.

225. Discussion: Eckstein 1984: 52–57. This is also suggested by App. *Ib.* 7.

226. Discussion in Eckstein 1984: 62–65 (with sources).

war with its neighbors the Torboletae. Saguntum had a long-standing enmity with them (Livy 28.39.8). The Torboletae appear to have been an inland tribe allied with Hannibal—and we know that wars between the hill peoples and the coastal towns were endemic on the east coast of Spain in the third century, the result of population pressure from the hills.²²⁷ In their war with the Torboletae it is thus unlikely that Saguntum was the simple aggressor, and highly unlikely that it was acting at Roman behest to undermine Punic power in Spain, as some scholars have suggested.²²⁸ This is because Rome was far away, and its support very uncertain (see Polyb. 3.15.1–2: constantly ignored Saguntine warnings to the Senate about Carthage), whereas Hannibal was close by, and very formidable. Rather, the Torboletae-Saguntum war seems just a natural event of the Mediterranean anarchy. But it led the Torboletae to call upon Hannibal for help, and the Saguntines to call upon Rome—another all-too-natural process, as we have seen.

Hannibal prepared military intervention on the side of his allies. The Romans responded by sending an embassy to New Carthage (autumn 220), warning him away from the Saguntines, and seeking assurance that he would abide by the treaty keeping Punic military expansion below the Ebro (Polyb. 3.15.5). Hannibal in fact was being pressed to confirm the status quo.²²⁹ But he responded angrily (3.15.6–12): Hasdrubal had been willing to accept the special status of Saguntum; Hannibal was not.²³⁰ Or as Dankward Vollmer puts it, Hannibal was no longer willing to submit to Roman diplomatic pressures founded on Roman military superiority in the first war.²³¹ And Hannibal took this position not merely out of pique, but because he believed that the geopolitical situation had changed to Carthage's advantage.

The Roman embassy may have received a less belligerent reception at Carthage, to which it went next (Polyb. 3.15.12); but there is no evidence. In spring 219 Hannibal, despite the Roman warning, besieged Saguntum. Though the siege lasted eight months, there was no Roman reaction; perhaps many senators doubted that Saguntum was worth a second war with Carthage. But when the city fell in late autumn 219,

227. See Rodríguez Adrados 1950: 563–87. Despite Hoyos 1998: 188–89, the Torboletae cannot be the coastal town of Turis, south of Saguntum, for the Romans destroyed the Torboletae during the war (Livy 24.2.10), yet—as Hoyos admits (189 n. 28)—Turis was in existence in the first century B.C.

228. Harris 1979: 202.

229. Rightly Hoyos 1998: 201.

230. See the comments of Schwarte 1983: 60–73.

231. Vollmer 1990: 134–35.

Hannibal—in typical Carthaginian fashion—had all its inhabitants killed or enslaved. A. E. Astin presents a good case that the arrival at Rome of this news caused a political revolution in the Senate;²³² an embassy was sent to Carthage in spring 218 demanding to know if Hannibal had acted with the authority of the home government (which suggests that the Romans were unsure), and demanding that he and his officers be turned over to Rome. During the war, Roman commanders tried to recover Saguntine survivors from slavery, and later they reestablished the city on its original site.²³³

There was a strong tradition in antiquity that Hannibal was unpopular at Carthage, his ambitions deeply suspected. If so, the Senate may have thought that the Punic government would accede to Roman demands.²³⁴ The *Patres* emphasized the seriousness of the situation by sending an unusually large embassy, including both outgoing consuls of 219, headed by a very senior senator. The demands of the embassy were unalterable. But the harsh compellence diplomacy of Rome in 218, instead of overawing the Carthaginians, solidified political support for Hannibal: the Punic senate bluntly rejected Roman demands, and declared war. Many scholars stress the harsh attitude of the Romans here; but harsh compellence diplomacy was, as we have seen, usual for great powers in antiquity, Carthage among them. It was both a consequence of the pressures of the anarchy, on the one hand—and an important independent element itself in what was a war-prone system.²³⁵

Thus Rome went to war for a city that no longer existed, and Carthage went to war for a political figure whom many Punic aristocrats distrusted. But beneath this apparently irrational conduct on both sides lay deep issues of pride, honor, and security. The Romans wanted their will obeyed, as had happened in 238/237—and the Carthaginians were adamant in refusing to obey another state's will, in good part because of previous incidents with Rome, probably mixed now with new confidence from their Spanish conquests and resources (Polyb. 3.14.9–10: explicit).

We must, of course, leave room for badly judged, vacillating, and even incoherent human decision making in the course of the crisis of 220–218.

232. Astin 1967: 593–95.

233. On this, see Ecskstein 1987: 202–3.

234. Significant opposition to the Barcids at Carthage: Rich 1996: 13 (with sources).

235. Rome's alleged exceptional harshness in diplomacy, exemplified in 218: Hoyos 1998: 107–8; Goldsworthy 2000: 145. Rome not unique in compellence diplomacy: see chaps. 3 and 4 above; and note the insulting Carthaginian warning to Rome in 264 (text above at n. 210).

The purpose of the new Punic empire in Spain was to enhance the military and financial capability of Carthage and thus change the balance of power—but this need not have led to war with Rome. If Hannibal had agreed to leave Saguntum alone—and it was a small place—the Punic conquest of Spain might have continued unimpeded in other directions for years, with the balance of power continuing to shift, and Rome ever less able to impose her will. That was Polybius's impression: he criticizes Hannibal for escalating a crisis with Rome prematurely, out of youthful anger, hatred, pride, and self-confidence (he was 27), when the wiser course would have been to spend more time accumulating far more resources against Rome before striking. The course of history was not set in stone.²³⁶

Yet the clash of interests between two powerful states, each aggressively seeking more control over its international environment, was serious. Rome had every reason to limit the rapidly growing power of Carthage, a former enemy, though it is noticeable that—in their search for security—the Romans did not accept such limits on themselves.²³⁷ Rome thus imposed the Ebro military line, and sought to preserve a special relationship with Saguntum south of the Ebro, when the growing might of the Barcids in Spain made this increasingly difficult. Neither action was a very harsh intervention; the Romans were not quarrelling with Punic control in general south of the Ebro (see Polyb. 3.15.6). But the Romans were indeed attempting to impose a level of control, and hence subordinate status, on Carthage. Meanwhile the Carthaginians had every reason to refuse to be controlled, or to let the growth of their power be blocked. They were a great state, with increasing resources of military power, and they would not be treated as a subordinate.²³⁸ Political scientists have in fact suggested that in militarized rivalrous dyads, movement toward parity in capability between the rivals makes conflict more likely; Rome and Carthage in the 220s appear to provide a classic confirmation of this. Students of international relations also posit that a state that has forced another state to back down once (as Rome forced Carthage to back down over Sardinia in 238/237) tends to see its adversary not as generally weak or contemptible, but rather as having been forced to cede merely to specific circumstances, circumstances that might change in the future. Roman suspicions of Punic conquests in Spain there-

236. See Polyb. 11.19 with 3.15, and Eckstein 1989: 1–15.

237. On both points see Goldsworthy 2000: 151.

238. See Hoyos 1998: 233–59.

fore need not be seen as unique, as an example of extraordinary paranoia on the Romans' part—let alone as an example of confident and ruthless pressure upon a victim perceived as helpless.²³⁹

Thus a local conflict between Saguntum and the *Torboletae*, a typical event of the Mediterranean anarchy, turned into a contest of resolve first between Rome and Hannibal, then between Rome and Carthage. The clash originated not so much in the aggressiveness of one side or the other (though both sides acted quite aggressively) as in the natural clash of ambitions for security and status (itself dependent upon power) that derived in good part from the tragic pressures of the interstate system. The existence of a rivalrous relationship and a bad history were additional factors inhibiting a peaceful resolution of the crisis, even though the original issue was not large.²⁴⁰ The subsequent war was not the result of a misunderstanding.²⁴¹ It was the result of mutual—and understandable—stubbornness.²⁴²

Once the war began, Hannibal took Alexander the Great as his model—and invaded the enemy heartland. The large new Punic empire in Spain, combined with great Celtic restiveness in the Po Valley, made an overland offensive into Italy a plausible plan. By autumn 218 Hannibal had brought his army from Spain into northern Italy. There he defeated the Romans and was reinforced by tens of thousands of Celtic warriors. In 217 he crossed the Apennines into central Italy, where he again inflicted severe defeats on Rome, the most terrible being at Cannae in 216, where on a single day perhaps fifty thousand Roman soldiers were killed. After such Roman defeats, numerous polities in southern Italy defected to him. The Punic home government meanwhile made its own strenuous efforts in the war—sending large forces to Sicily and Sardinia (to recover old provinces), and to Spain (to preserve the new one), though rarely to Hannibal directly.²⁴³ Rome nevertheless found the resources to fight back, while Hannibal was always forced to operate on relatively slim resources,

239. On the dangers as one state approaches to parity with another within a militarized rivalrous dyad, see Thompson 1999: 18 (citing examples, and earlier scholarship). On the typical reaction of governmental elites, according to political scientists, after another state backs down (not what one might at first think), see Jervis 1997: 170–71 (citing examples, and earlier scholarship).

240. Another typical phenomenon of militarized rivalrous dyads: Thompson 1999: 6.

241. So, e.g., Welwei 1977: esp. 163–64 and 172–73.

242. Astin 1967: 593–96; cf. Hoyos 1998: 253.

243. On the large scale of defections in southern Italy after the severe Roman defeats by Hannibal, see Lazenby 1996: 43–44. Note that in 214 the government of Syracuse went over to Carthage in exchange for a promise to be allowed rule over all of Sicily (see Polyb. 7.4.8 and Livy 24.6.5, with Eckstein 1987: 137–38). As at Tarentum, great expansionist ambitions died hard at Syracuse.

and even with his brilliant generalship they were never sufficient (Polyb. 11.19).

After seventeen years of bitter war the Romans finally won, by invading Punic North Africa and defeating Hannibal there. Yet the peace treaty imposed in 201 was moderate: it left Carthage in control of its magnificent agricultural heartland; no garrison was imposed; and even Hannibal (despite the Roman demand of 218) remained in the city as a prominent citizen. What the second war did establish was the political subordination of Carthage to Rome—which the Romans sternly enforced over the next fifty years.²⁴⁴

For our present purposes, it is also important that the Senate drew a specific lesson from these events: if Rome had answered the pleas of Saguntum in time, Hannibal might have been kept so busy in faraway Spain that he would never have launched his devastating invasion of Italy (Livy 31.7.3).²⁴⁵ That is: there was peril for the State in answering pleas for protection from polities under threat, as shown at Capua in 343 and Messana in 264; but there was, equally, peril for the state in not answering some pleas for protection and thus keeping an enemy at arm's length. It was to a Senate still reeling from the Hannibalic War, and from the bitter lessons in power politics it seemed to have taught, that a sequence of embassies came from Greek states in 202–200 B.C., repeatedly warning of a new and very grave danger in the East, and asking for protection.²⁴⁶

CONCLUSION

The theme of this chapter has been that during its first three hundred years, the Republic of Rome, however expansionist, did not face a world of peaceable states, mere passive targets waiting to be victimized. On the contrary: Rome was certainly an aggressive, expansionist polity, but its major neighbors and chief antagonists in the West were themselves aggressive and expansionist polities—imperialists just like the Romans.²⁴⁷ Rome was one state in an interstate system where security was scarce, where all states competed bitterly with each other for security via the gaining of power, and where all states were intent on expanding their power, resources, territory, and influence. The Romans believed this was

244. See Walsh 1965: 149–60.

245. See also Livy 21.16.2 and 19.9, with Merten 1965: 12; cf. Briscoe 1973: 72. An authentic late third-century opinion: Briscoe 19.

246. See above, chap. 4, and below, chap. 7.

247. Rightly, Goldsworthy 2000: 71.

their world, and it was not Roman paranoia. A massive amount of evidence shows that the security problem facing Rome and every other state—stemming from every other state in the system (including Rome)—was real, and that the penalties for failure to deal with it were cruel. This was the pressure of the militarized interstate anarchy, which we have emphasized—though the militarized culture that developed within individual states as a consequence of and as an adaptation to the cruel environment also strongly contributed in itself to a war-prone world.

It is clear from this chapter that the Roman experience of competition for influence, power, and security, first in Latium, then in central Italy, and then in the wider western Mediterranean, was a harsh experience, against formidable and warlike rivals. The Etruscan city-states to Rome's north partook in the common militaristic culture of Tyrrhenian Italy. In their wars with Rome, Etruscan city-states appear often to have been the aggressors, though Rome eventually defeated them all. North of the Etruscans were the Celtic peoples of the Po Valley. Ferocious warriors emerging from a pre-state (tribal) anarchic environment, they glorified military violence, conquered the Po from the Etruscans, sacked and burned Rome itself circa 390 B.C., and periodically invaded central Italy for the next two hundred years. Meanwhile, the Samnite hill peoples to Rome's south, with a tradition of violent expansion of their own, were serious competitors with Rome for military domination in central Italy. And south of the Samnites lay Tarentum (Taras)—a great Greek city established and maintained by war against the indigenous population, with a long military tradition and wide ambitions. Most formidable of all was the city-state of Carthage, which between 550 and 300 B.C. had established—by warfare—a widespread hegemony in the western Mediterranean. The stereotype of the Carthaginians as peaceful merchants is false: by 300 B.C. their armies had carved out a land empire in North Africa larger and richer than the territory of the Roman state combined with that of all its allies in Italy, and the evidence is strong that their aristocracy viewed success in war as the great road to status, power, and glory within the community.

In terms of the dichotomy between status-quo and revisionist states within a system, as discussed in chapters 2 and 4 above, it is clear that all of Rome's main neighbors and competitors were at least limited revisionist states. All were ready to take strong steps to revise their place in the system of states in their favor. Rome was the same.²⁴⁸ Among these

248. In Spain in the late 220s, however, Rome appears to have been seeking to maintain the status quo against rising Punic power (see text above at n. 230).

fiercely competitive polities, diplomatic efforts to end crises often failed. They failed because the system in which these states existed was prone to objective clashes of interest (these were not “misunderstandings”), and because the instruments of crisis diplomacy and its general tone were so primitive. In such crises each state, for reasons of honor and status, tended to engage in public displays of compellence—compellence diplomacy that in turn initiated not peace processes so much as public contests of resolve. Whenever we have examined diplomacy in detail in this chapter, we have found scenes where envoys end up insulting one another: Rome and the Senones circa 390, Rome and Tarentum in 281, Rome and Carthage in 264, Rome and Carthage in 220–218. Insulting people to their face is not likely to produce a beneficial diplomatic result. Sometimes such scenes even led to murder.²⁴⁹ Bellicose outcomes were a probability because of the harsh diplomacy that all ancient communities habitually employed with potential enemies.

The Roman historical experience was therefore one both of facing intense threat—and of an increasing habit of command. But focusing for the moment just on the western Mediterranean and leaving aside the anarchic and violent state-system in the Greek East, both the experience of threat and the impulse to command others do not differentiate Rome from the other states in the West that managed to become great (or even middling) powers. Both Syracuse and Tarentum had ambitions for wide hegemony. Both failed to achieve it on a stable basis because neither had the requisite military power to force or enforce it, nor the requisite political skill to create and manage a system of acquiescent or subordinate allies (which would in turn have led to increased military power). Carthage gained its empire mostly by violence (though also by invitation from weaker states that needed protection); it maintained a sterner and more intrusive administration than the Romans did (and hence incurred the intense antagonism of subordinated states) and was as firm as Rome about maintaining its sphere of power despite the enormous burden of long wars. Such comparisons do not in the least minimize Roman militarism, aggressiveness, and will to power (as we will see below in chapter 6)—and are not intended to do so. But they do help to put those stern Roman characteristics into a broader Mediterranean context.

Within this harsh systemic environment a special role was played by weaker states. They were independent actors in the various anarchic state-

249. Roman envoys to Veii (see text above at n. 30); Roman envoys to the Illyrians in 230 B.C. (Polyb. 2.8.6–13).

systems to which they all belonged, actors with their own problems and their own goals, and periodically they faced threats not only to their independence but to their existence. In the absence or ineffectiveness of interstate institutions of mediation and reconciliation, relative safety could be obtained only through power, which these states did not possess in sufficient amount—so, in times of crisis, they turned to those who did possess it, and paid whatever price was thereupon required. Their flocking to a powerful state's protection sometimes resulted in empire by invitation; it was a natural process in an anarchy. For the tendency of the great states—as the contemporary historian Polybius emphasizes, all great states, of course including Rome (24.10.11)—was to answer pleas for protection in the affirmative. This was a matter of prestige (*ibid.*), as well as of objective self-interest: for to reject an appeal for protection, as the ancients well knew, was to leave the suppliant to the growing and probably dangerous power of others (see, e.g., Thuc. 1.36 and 1.71.4–5). Thus while we are talking here in part about will to power on the part of a great state, we are also in part examining the pressures of an ineluctable process.

Yet assuming with Stephen Walt that weaker states under threat ally themselves with the least threatening of the powerful states that they confront, it is instructive how often the least threatening choice seemed to these states to be Rome. Not that Rome was loved: as Livy makes clear in the case of the Apulian cities, it was that other enemies were thought even more dangerous to independence or even physical existence (9.13.6). That was the brutal choice small states in antiquity sometimes faced.²⁵⁰

But occasionally such action by a weaker state, following its own interest in seeking protection against a powerful neighbor, created serious conflicts of interest between rival great powers. All the great powers tended to answer pleas for help affirmatively, if only because in an anarchic state system power depends on the willingness to use it; and thus an originally local conflict was often replicated at a higher level and with more violence. The great ancient states, including Rome, were in any case continuously expanding their definition of what constituted for them an acceptable security situation—what constituted, as their power grew, their legitimate security interests. These security interests in turn looked back, though from more and more distance, toward fundamental state preservation—which is why those interests were fought for so fiercely. Yet this

250. The dozens of polities that flocked to Rome during the Sicilian campaign of 263 (text above at n. 212) were motivated primarily by fear of Rome itself (though perhaps also by the hope of gaining a good arrangement): see Eckstein 1987: 103–15.

process in itself created fertile ground for conflict between great states; and the situation is in fact another common phenomenon of anarchic interstate systems when considered as a group across time.²⁵¹

This generally dangerous situation of multiple and simultaneously expanding spheres of influence and simultaneously expanding definitions of acceptable security, however, became especially dangerous in antiquity when calls for help from weaker states were involved. Then we can observe rival security interests colliding on a periphery where the sphere of influence of different large powers is contested; the result was often war.²⁵² This situation of a contested periphery occurred at Teanum Sidicinum, where pleas for aid created war between Capua and the Samnites; at Capua, where Roman protection (and potential hegemony) created war between Rome and the Samnites; at Messana, where Roman protection created war with both Syracuse and Carthage; at Saguntum, where it created another war with Carthage. The actions of smaller states thus increased the frequency of clashes of objective interest among the larger polities, and when such clashes of interest developed it was difficult to avoid violence, given the primitiveness of traditional diplomacy and the widespread state instinct and habit of compellence in a crisis. Thus Rome between 500 and 220 B.C., in good part by answering pleas for protection, both was drawn into and brought itself into ever larger systems of states that nevertheless shared the same harsh basic characteristics as had formed the earliest Roman experience. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that every great state in the ancient Mediterranean had lived through the same harsh historical experience of ruthless rivalry from and against others that this chapter has delineated for the Romans, and because this harsh historical experience thus informed both the perceptions and expectations of governing elites everywhere. Under such circumstances, war—state violence on a mass scale—was indeed normal: that is, it was the all-too-normal method for settling serious interstate conflicts of interest.²⁵³

251. See Liska 1978: 4–6 for the general rule; on Rome: 11–14. Cf. also Geller and Singer 1998: chaps. 4–6.

252. On the concept of a “contested periphery”—a border region for which two larger empires, kingdoms, or polities compete—see Allen 1997: 320; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997: 37; Cline 2000: 7. Cf. earlier Liska 1978: 4–6, and Thompson 1999: 15. It is noteworthy that although this analytical concept is now being applied generally by political scientists, it first emerged in a study of the clash of states in antiquity: Allen 1997 (the Assyrian Middle East).

253. Cf. Waltz 1959: 160; Waltz 1979: 102; and Waltz 1988: 620–21.

Rome and Roman Militarism within the Anarchic Interstate System

At the end of chapter 4 above, we saw that the Greek historian Polybius proposed an at least partly systemic explanation for the Roman decision of 200 B.C. to respond to the pleas of Greek states for Roman intervention in the East. His hypothesis is crucial to this study. Are modern scholars to understand this world-historical event as partly the result of impersonal forces generated by what Polybius terms the emerging “interconnectedness” (*symplokē*) between geopolitical events in the eastern and western Mediterranean, combined with the inability of Ptolemaic Egypt to maintain its place as a balancer of Macedon and Syria (which Polybius also emphasizes)—that is, combined with a major power-transition crisis in the state-system of the Greek East? Or should the decision be seen primarily as the result of Rome as an exceptionally aggressive and “unlimited revisionist state,” intent on destroying the entire Mediterranean state-system in order to replace it with Roman hegemony, and using the appeals of the Greek states in 202–200 B.C. merely as an excuse?

Polybius himself, like Thucydides, gives a “layered” explanation of the complex events that are his focus. Part of his explanation is at the system level, with an emphasis on prevailing interstate anarchy and the impact of the *symplokē*; part of it stresses the sudden collapse of Egypt (i.e., the profound power-transition crisis occurring in the East); part of it stresses the actions of the less powerful Greek states in 201–200 B.C. in calling in Rome because of the desperate situation created by the sub-

sequent aggressive actions of Antiochus III and Philip V. But Polybius also says that Rome itself was an aggressive, highly ambitious and militarized polity. In the parlance of political science, this last is an example of unit-attribute theory; and it is stated at important points in the narrative (1.3.6 and 3.2.6).¹

THE THESIS OF EXCEPTIONAL ROMAN BELLIGERENCE

Plenty of ancient evidence exists beyond Polybius's general statements at 1.3.6 and 3.2.6 to show that Rome was a heavily militarized and very assertive state. Much of this material is collected in W. V. Harris's *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome*, a groundbreaking study that has dominated scholarly discussion of Roman expansion since its publication in 1979.

Thus there is no doubt that the Roman senatorial aristocracy was schooled in war from adolescence. Since no one could run for even the lowest public offices in Rome in this period without serving ten campaigning seasons in the army (Polyb. 3.19.4), and since election to public office was the central career and ambition of every scion of the senatorial aristocracy, it follows that long exposure to war and the army was the central life experience of every Roman aristocratic male during his twenties—and the impact must have been large. Similarly, the highest elected public offices, including the consulship (the highest regular office) were in this period essentially army commands. Achievement in war was certainly the primary road to an individual's power and influence (*auctoritas*) within the Senate and before the assemblies of the Roman people, and ultimately the primary road to a glorious memory (*laus, gloria*). Again, it is clear that the Romans expected to have to wage war against various perceived enemies every year, that the basic foreign-relations task of the Senate was the assignment of army commands every spring, and that the Roman populace expected that a significant portion of its male population would be enrolled in the fighting forces every year (averaging about 13% annually between 203 and 133 B.C.).² Finally, it is clear that the Roman state as an entity, and many individuals high and low,

1. The stress on the *symplokē*, on international chaos, and on the collapse of Egypt: Polyb. 1.3.3–4; 1.4.11; 4.28.3–4; 5.67.11–68.1; 5.101–8; most of book 14 (apparently); 15.20; cf. 2.12.13. Polyb. 1.3.6 and 3.2.6 are emphasized by Harris 1979: esp. 107–17, and Derow 1979: esp. 1–2. On unit-attribute theory, see above, chap. 2, text at n. 57.

2. On the Roman ideology of military glory, see, e.g., Cic. *Mur.* 9.22–13.29; Sal. *Cat.* 1–3 and *Jug.* 2–4. On army service, see the chart in Hopkins 1978: 33. The 13% average

profited economically from success in war (in the form of loot, and sometimes land), and that the ideology of the Republic contained a strong emphasis on military victory.³

Rome, then, was a highly militarized, militaristic, and assertive state, led by an aristocracy imbued with a strong warrior ethos, which in turn was backed by a populace that accepted war as a fact of life. But in convincingly setting forth the harshly militaristic characteristics of Roman Republican culture and society, Harris contends that this is also the central source both of Roman expansionism and of Roman international success. The impression given in the second half of *War and Imperialism*, when we pass from the internal characteristics of Roman Republican culture and society to an analysis of Rome's interactions with other states, is that Rome was not merely a militarized, militaristic, and assertive polity, but that Rome was an *exceptionally* militarized, militaristic, and assertive polity—not merely in modern terms but in ancient terms.⁴

Harris, however, achieves the impression of Roman exceptionalism in good part by not engaging in detailed analysis of the internal cultures and external behavior of the other large powers with which Rome interacted in the brutal competition for survival and security within the Mediterranean. Rome, and Rome alone, is the subject of critical inquiry, for Rome was a state with “a pathological character,” which had “dark and irrational roots.”⁵ Hence in Harris's detailed studies of specific events there is no need to investigate in detail the equally aggressive and belligerent conduct of other large polities in their interactions both with each other and with Rome: their conduct is either ignored or explicitly denied.⁶ In the resulting reconstruction of the expansion of Roman power and influence, other states are thus not true international actors but rather the passive objects of Rome's internally driven actions and policies. The militaristic distortions within Roman society and culture account for all

figure is somewhat misleading, since in the terrible crisis in the last part of the third century the army was taking over 25% of citizen males annually, whereas after 170 B.C. this was well below 10% annually: *ibid.*

3. See the illuminating discussion in Harris 1979: chaps. I–III.

4. So also, e.g., Badian 1968: 5–6, or Hopkins 1978: chap. 1. Badian has since changed his position: see Badian 1983: 401–5.

5. Harris 1979: 53.

6. See, e.g., the discussion of the origins of the Roman declaration of war in 200 B.C. against Philip V (Harris 1979: 212–18), or of the war between Rome and Antiochus III, which broke out in 192 with Antiochus's invasion of European Greece (*ibid.* 219–23). See also below, n. 86.

major events—as if diplomacy and war were not an interaction. With such a methodology and on such a reconstruction, the explanation for Rome's rise to power in the Mediterranean becomes self-evident: it is a story of continual aggression against relatively blameless neighbors by a state that had become an insatiable predator within the international system.⁷

War and Imperialism has been as influential in Roman studies as Fritz Fischer's similar indictment of the internal culture and external policies of Wilhelmine Germany (the bluntly titled *Griff nach der Weltmacht*) has been in German studies, or William Appleman Williams's *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* has been in American studies.⁸ There has been some criticism for oversimplifying.⁹ But it is fair to say that a majority of scholars now publishing on Rome's rise to world power believe that *War and Imperialism* has found the brutal and essential truth about the origins of Rome's eventual hegemony in the Mediterranean. In recent years versions of the Harris thesis—often complete with the failure to consider in detail the cultural attitudes and geopolitical conduct of states other than Rome—have been strongly asserted by many scholars.¹⁰ Hence we now commonly find the assertion that Rome devoted itself to an expansionist foreign policy “to an exceptional degree”; that “at some period Rome became unusually belligerent”; that it pursued “a continuous policy of aggression”; that it was “the rotten apple” in the Hellenistic system of states; or to quote the question of T. J. Cornell, “Why was Rome so belligerent?”¹¹ Note that the use here of emotive terminology such as

7. See Harris 1979: 105–17 and chap. 5 passim; cf. also Harris 1984: esp. 13–15 and 21–22, and Harris 1990: 494–510, esp. 495.

8. On Fischer and Williams, see above, chap. 2, n. 56.

9. Sherwin-White 1980: 177–81; Briscoe 1980: 86–87; Rich 1993.

10. Rowland 1983; Rawson 1986: esp. 423; Hölkeskamp 1987: esp. chap. 5, cf. Hölkeskamp 1993; Mandell 1989: esp. 92 (where the outbreak of the Roman war with Antiochus III is discussed without reference to Antiochus's invasion of Greece!); Mandell 1991; Derow 1991; Habicht 1997: 185, cf. 194–95; Heftner 1997: esp. 186 and 317; Rosenstein 1999: 193–205; Campbell 2002: 167–69; and now Derow 2003: 53–54, where Rome's supposed aggressions in the Po Valley after 238 and then after 225 are discussed without mentioning either the massive Celtic attack on the Roman colony of Ariminum in 238 or the massive Celtic invasion of Italy in 225; *ibid.* 57, where Philip V's peace with Aetolia in 206 is discussed without underlining the devastation he inflicted in his invasion of Aetolia that year; and *ibid.* 63–64, where Antiochus III's invasion of central Greece—despite repeated Roman warnings—is dismissed as the cause of the Syrian War.

11. Rome as aggressive and expansionist to an exceptional degree: Raafaub et al. 1992: 13–15, 49–50, and 34 (the quote); cf. Raafaub 1991: 576 and 582, and Raafaub 1996: 273–314, esp. 296. “Unusually belligerent”: Harris 1990: 495. “Continuous aggression”: Oakley 1993: 19–37, esp. 31 and 33 (the quote); Cornell 1995: 365 (the question). Cornell even compares Roman expansion to a criminal operation—steady robbery (367). The “rotten apple”: Keeley 1999: 128. On uniquely aggressive Roman aims and conduct, see also Veyne 1975: 794–95, 818–19, and 823–24.

“aggression” implies that an *illegitimate* use of force in the interstate arena is under discussion.¹²

But the hypothesis of a Roman imperial *Sonderweg*—that Rome owed its success within the Hellenistic international system primarily to internally generated and exceptionally intense militarism and aggression—ought to be treated with skepticism, because it significantly distorts the world with which the Romans had to cope. To study a state’s characteristics and intentions without careful regard to the international structure and environment within which that state existed is methodologically dangerous.¹³

No international-systems theorist denies that international outcomes are significantly affected by the internal culture of polities: in the words of Kenneth Waltz, international systemic structures “shape and shove” but “do not determine the actions of states.”¹⁴ Internal culture affects external outcomes because a state’s culture provides its elite with a particular and quite limited way of organizing its perceptions and actions; a state’s freedom to choose among policies is limited in good part by its elite’s set of assumptions, memories, values, norms, beliefs, and formal knowledge—factors that shape its collective understanding of the world.¹⁵ The question, then, is not whether a state’s internal culture (for instance, the militarized and militaristic culture of Rome) significantly affects the international political interactions in which it participates: it certainly does. The question is whether large historical outcomes are in fact primarily determined by what the internal culture of one state is like.¹⁶

The latter, of course, is what we mean by “unit-attribute theory.” It was discussed in general in chapter 2, as well as in chapter 3 with regard to fifth-century Athens, where it was already found empirically suspect.¹⁷ And Harris’s *War and Imperialism* is a classic example of unit-attribute theory. The fundamental question it asks, the single research agenda it sets, is: What were the internal structures within Roman society, economy, and culture that led to constant Roman warmaking and to extraordinary Roman aggression and expansionism? A recent work influenced by Harris is explicit: “What needs to be investigated . . . is

12. On the term “aggression,” see Aron 1973: 111—who argues that since relations among states are regulated by the use of force to begin with, the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate use of force is in many cases not obvious (*ibid.*).

13. See Spirtas 1996: 412.

14. Waltz 2000: 24; cf. on Waltzian theory Copeland 2000: 235.

15. Desch 1998: 144–45; cf. above, chap. 5, text at n. 1.

16. See Waltz 1979: 61; Waltz 1988: 617.

17. See above, chap. 2, text at n. 57; and chap. 3, text at n. 145.

the development among [Rome's] leaders and citizens of attitudes that not only tolerated but encouraged an aggressive foreign policy, wars, and imperialism."¹⁸

Yet obviously wars take place by acts of mutual will between states. Internal culture cannot, then, be the only topic that needs research in order to explain the rise of Rome via constant war. We will soon see why such an approach is as empirically suspect with regard to Rome as it was with Athens in chapter 3—although any reader of chapters 4 and 5 above, on the fearsome nature of the contemporary Hellenistic Greek states and their state-system, and on the *terrores multi* that inhabited the West, should already have a good idea of what the empirical problem is. But the persistent empirical difficulties of unit-attribute theory are not accidental. They derive from weaknesses with the theory at the level of theory itself. This is a good point at which to address those theoretical weaknesses.¹⁹

THEORETICAL DIFFICULTIES

The fundamental theoretical problem with unit-attribute theory is that states exist not in isolation, but rather as the actors as well as the acted-upon within systems of states. The structural characteristics of any broad system—anarchy, multipolarity, and few normative constraints on the use of force; or hierarchy, unipolarity, and strong normative constraints on the use of force—naturally have a large impact on the behavior of each unit within the system. This means that causes at the level of individual units and causes at the level of the international system (in the Roman case an anarchic, militarized, and multipolar system filled with assertive, aggressive states) in fact interact to produce large international outcomes. Hence explanations of state action, and/or explanations of large international outcomes, that focus solely at the unit level, even if they focus on an important unit, its actions and characteristics, are

18. Raaflaub 1996: 179. See also Oakley 1993: "The main concern of this essay will be to identify the structures which led Rome to expand" (9), by which he means "structural impulses within Roman society" (22); debt to Harris: 9 n. 1. See also Rosenstein 1999: 196–205; debt to Harris: 198 n. 9.

19. At its worst, unit-attribute theory verges on racism, as with the assertion that Roman expansionism and conquest can be partly explained by "the bellicosity innate in the Italic peoples" (Oakley 1993: 18). The Greeks of both the Classical and the Hellenistic periods were no less bellicose than the Romans or other Italic peoples; see above, chaps. 3 and 4, for the main reasons.

bound to be insufficient. And being insufficient, they are bound to be misleading.²⁰

The question, then, is one of assigning relative weight to the internal as opposed to the external factors in the causes of state behavior. The task is complicated, because the attributes of the states influence the system, the attributes of the system influence the states, and *all* attributes simultaneously and synergistically influence one another.²¹

Yet here the impact of the international system should be given significant weight. This is because every system is much more than the sum of its constantly and synergistically interacting parts; rather, as Emile Durkheim says, every large system is itself a new entity, with its own specific reality and its own specific characteristics. The impact that this new totality and its characteristics exercise upon the units within it needs to be faced.²²

Further, not only are causes at the unit level and causes at the level of the larger system reciprocal, but it makes sense that—as in any social setting—the large and enduring structures that have developed over time are at least as likely to influence the behavior of individual actors within those structures as the other way around. Indeed, this study has argued the likelihood that these large and enduring structures influence most individual actors more profoundly and consistently than the reverse: that is, that the causal influences between system and unit are often weighted asymmetrically in favor of the system. Individual actors (governments, governmental elites, even individual statesmen) have real agency and always make their own choices. Yet those choices are also, and simultaneously, constrained both by the material pressures generated by the (often brutal) interstate system as well as by the elite's own beliefs and perceptions, which are themselves the result of (often bitter) experience about how the system actually works.²³ This context makes understandable the comment of Sir Edward Grey, British foreign secretary in 1914: "In great af-

20. Waltz 1979: esp. 61–65 and 68 (and chaps. 2–4 in general); Waltz 1988: 618; Thompson 1988: 12–13; Jervis 1993: 25–46; Wohlforth 1994: 107.

21. See Geller and Singer 1998: 121.

22. The whole is more than the sum of its parts but is a separate entity with its own characteristics: Waltz 1979: esp. 60–67 and 74–75; Midlarsky 1988: 2–3, drawing on the sociology of Durkheim; Thompson 1988: 12–13; Gaddis 1992: 14; Geller and Singer 1998: 121.

23. See Abrams 1982: 2–3; Midlarsky 1988: 2–3; Thompson 1988: 12–13. The impact of internal cultural perceptions on state decision making (perceptions affected themselves by the international environment): above, text at n. 15.

fairs there is much more in the minds of the events (if such an expression may be used) than in the minds of the chief actors.”²⁴

More concretely: to say that a state frequently goes to war is the same as saying that a state is experiencing intense competition from other units within the system in which it is a part.²⁵ Thus when Rome ran out of ferocious competitors in the interstate system, frequent large-scale war-making by Rome ceased, replaced by the *pax Romana*, the Roman peace. It is important to understand that in many regions of the Mediterranean the *pax Romana* came into existence not late but rather at a quite early point, and that most Roman high officials became administrators rather than generals at a quite early point. This is true in Sicily after 210 B.C.; in all of peninsular Italy by 200 (and in most areas of Italy long before that); in the Po Valley after 190; in most of Spain after 133; in North Africa after 100; and for ever-longer stretches of time in the Greek East. Similarly, Roman aristocratic culture after about 160 B.C. was gradually becoming more and more civilian in character and focus.²⁶ Yet these twin crucial developments were both occurring well within the period when, according to most scholars, powerful internal cultural, political, and economic pressures were supposedly pushing Rome the war-machine and its militarized aristocracy implacably, in Schumpeteresque fashion, along its specially brutal and bellicose *Sonderweg*.²⁷

Second, a crucial assumption of all unit-attribute theory is that war and expansion require a special explanation to account for their frequent occurrence even in an anarchic system. This special explanation is then sought in the existence of special evil—the specially evil state. States that have unlimited revisionist aims certainly exist (see above, chapter 4). But if in a system of interstate anarchy warfare is a regular occurrence and common behavior for most states—that is, if it is the normal (if tragic) way in which most states resolve serious clashes of interest—then this crucial explanatory paradigm of unit-attribute theory must be used sparingly and with great care. The danger lies in mistaking normal (if tragic) interstate violence for exceptional belligerence (pathol-

24. Quoted in Wight 1978: 96.

25. See Keeley 1999: 48.

26. Cornell 1993: 154–67, is fundamental here.

27. See Harris 1979: 225–54 (covering the period 187–95 B.C.). This is not to deny that after the mid-second century there were no great wars of Roman expansion; there were, and large territories were seized, especially in the north, but these wars occurred under the aegis of special “great men”—Pompey, Caesar, Antony, Augustus, Claudius, Trajan—rather than as a function of senatorial policy. Cf. Cornell 1993: 159.

ogy or evil).²⁸ Yet warfare as the normal way of dealing with objective and unregulated clashes of interest is what chapters 3, 4, and 5 have established as the dominant mode of state conduct both in the Classical and in the Hellenistic Mediterranean, in both the eastern and the western Mediterranean.

Third, unit-attribute theorists assume that actions and relationships between and among states are linear—that is, they flow primarily in one direction: in this case, primarily from the aggressor state outward. Traditional historiography of empire has, in addition, focused strongly on the metropole, and has worked instinctively from the designated metropole outwards to the periphery. This is one reason why scholars who employ unit-attribute theory tend not to pay much attention to the culture, attitudes, and actions of states other than the purported aggressor they are studying.²⁹ But international-systems theorists argue that this paradigm of linear interstate interaction is incorrect. The interstate world in reality is characterized not by linearity but rather by simultaneity. It is made up of a multiplicity of interacting units, each interacting complexly with others, each pursuing different goals, and all interacting simultaneously and synergistically together.³⁰

This highly intricate situation tends to create unexpected and complex effects even if we are dealing simply with two states interacting with each other in a direct and simple dyad (“feedback loops,” in social-science terminology); and it tends to create other unexpected and complex effects in the wider sphere of the larger system, indirectly (“ripple effects,” in social-science terms). But such a high degree of complexity in interstate interactions means that every state in a large interstate system will experience difficulties in predicting the outcomes of its own actions, let alone managing them.³¹ This is because states are opaque to one another in terms both of capacity and intent; their reactions are not very predictable; and we are discussing the capacity, intent, and reactions of multiple states interacting simultaneously. As both Robert Jervis and Richard

28. Pathology: Harris 1979: 53. Tragedy vs. evil in international relations theory: Spirtas 1996: 385–423. Opting for the profoundly tragic implications of Realism’s view of international relations: see recently Copeland 2000: 12, 117, 145–47, 165–68, 245.

29. Hence the narrative structure of Harris 1979: chap. V, or of Williams 1962, or of Fischer 1964.

30. Criticism of the general trend of imperial historiography, with its focus on the metropole, as introverted: Bayly 1989: 1–15.

31. Instinctive but incorrect assumption of the linearity of interstate relationships: see the comments of Jervis 1993: 25–27, 35, and 41. Difficulty of predicting or managing the results of one’s own actions within a complex system: Jervis 1993: 31 and 33–36; cf. Snyder 1993: 5 and 17–19; Jervis 1997: 29–67; Lebow 2001: 591–616.

Ned Lebow have emphasized, in a situation where you have multiple individuals simultaneously seeking independent goals and reacting simultaneously to what others are doing, the outcomes will rarely be intended by any of them.³² Indeed, Jervis has recently noted that a state's own reaction to the specifics of a crisis are often unknown to its decision-making elite beforehand—a hypothesis borne out by the Roman experience.³³ As for foreign crises, they are, like war itself, “the province of uncertainty . . . hidden in the fog of a greater or lesser uncertainty.”³⁴

Again, because any large international system is composed of a multiplicity of simultaneously interacting units, theorists argue that large alterations within the system often come about via a multiplier effect produced by the simultaneous interaction of many factors at both the unit level and the system level, rather than by the action of a single unit, even a powerful one. The effects of these synergistic interactions are (again) larger than the sum of their parts.³⁵ Powerful states with unlimited revisionist aims, true revolutionary states, do come into existence (partly from the pressure of the external environment). But even such unlimited revisionist states may be constrained toward coexistence with others if there are severe-enough systemic pressures that overwhelm these states' highly expansionist aims.³⁶ This was the eventual fate of Philip V and Antiochus III. Conversely, the complexity of interaction explains why even a basically status-quo state, or—more likely—a limited revisionist state, may increase its international power through ripple effects because of actions and changes occurring far away in the complexly interrelated international system.³⁷ Such a circumstance would be more the product of the dynamics of the system than of the especially predatory character of the state itself—though the unit's governing elite would have to decide to take advantage of the opportunity, which requires a cultural stance

32. See Jervis 2001: 287; Lebow 2001: 614–16.

33. On uncertainty not only about other states' reaction but about a state's own reaction to a crisis, see Jervis 1997: 29–67 and Jervis 2001: 282. In the Roman case, there is record of hesitation about whether to act (a) against Tarentum in 281 (see above, chap. 5); (b) in Sicily in 264 (Polyb. 1.11.1–3); (c) in Illyria in 230 (Polyb. 2.8.3); (d) in the Saguntum crisis in 220–218 (see above, chap. 5); (e) in the crisis in the eastern Mediterranean in 201–200 (see below, chap. 7).

34. Kaplan 2002: 38; cf. 134 (a paraphrase of Clausewitz).

35. Waltz 1979: 90–93 and 107–8.

36. Ibid. 63; cf. Thompson 1988: 13.

37. Gilpin 1980: 22–23 and 94–95; Rose 1998: 165; Thompson 1999: 8 (with examples). On the categories of states, from status-quo or orthodox (very mild) revisionist to revolutionary (unlimited revisionist), see above, chaps. 2 and 4.

favoring expansion of power and influence. Here it is important that, historically, few governing elites have ever refused such opportunities.³⁸

Thus in considering how transformations occur within large and complex international systems, it is not enough to say that a revolutionary state with its aggressive intentions was the cause of the revolution. Even if one could ascertain that a particular state was truly “revolutionary,” careful analysis would still require one to lift one’s gaze from consideration of that state in isolation, in order to examine the broader political field: first to discover its general character and the impact of that character upon all the states within it; second to discover what particular factors at the system level permitted or even encouraged such a transformation to take place, and/or what particular factors at the system level worked to inhibit or even prevent such a transformation. Attributing enormous alterations in large and complex systems merely to the characteristics of a single state within that system is suspect in principle.³⁹

THE EMPIRICAL PROBLEM

The above difficulties at the level of theory with the prevailing view (which attributes the rise of Rome in the Mediterranean system primarily to Rome’s alleged exceptional militarism) are compounded greatly by the empirical problem. Roman culture was indeed heavily militarized, militaristic, and diplomatically assertive—it is not the purpose of this study to deny that. But of what major Hellenistic state could this not be said? This grim aspect of international politics in the Hellenistic Mediterranean has been discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5 above. But if every first-rank state (and indeed, every middle-rank state, as well as many small states) in the Hellenistic Mediterranean was heavily militarized, militaristic, and assertive, then how can the fact that Rome was heavily militarized, militaristic, and assertive be the crucial explanation (the “critical variable.” in social-science terms) regarding the expansion of Roman power? Given such a brutal overall situation, where, then, would be the explanatory Roman exceptionalism?

Let us examine in detail several important examples of this broad empirical problem. First, in *War and Imperialism* Harris makes much of the prayers of the Roman censors every five years “to make the things of the

38. Waltz 2000: 33.

39. Waltz 1979: 67–69 (and chaps. 2–4 in general); cf. Thompson 1988: 13.

Roman people better and greater” (*ut populi Romani res meliores amplioresque facerent*: Val. Max. 4.1.10); he believes the prayer is powerful evidence of a consciously imperialistic attitude at Rome toward the non-Roman world.⁴⁰ This interpretation of the censors’ prayer has been challenged, on the grounds that the prayer is for increase in a general way, and that since the censors were deeply involved in the enumeration of people and property, it might be referring partly to agricultural prosperity and to increase in population.⁴¹ But even more important: even if the quinquennial censorial prayer for increase does primarily mean expansion of the geopolitical power of Rome, this should not be viewed in isolation but needs to be put into a wider political-cultural context—the fervent and often officially expressed desire of other ancient states for imperial expansion.

For instance, what would be said by scholars about exceptional Roman aggressiveness if at Rome there had been an oath for increase sworn to the gods in a public ceremony each year, and not by civilian officials but by all recruits entering the army, binding the incoming soldiers to leave their state not smaller but larger and more powerful? Such an annual army oath of expansion did not exist at Rome. But it did exist, for instance, in Classical and Hellenistic Athens.⁴² Perhaps even the aggressive-sounding Athenian army oath and its accompanying military ceremony reflects not so much imperialistic greed as an anxiety, in a world determined by brutal power, that Athenian power should be not diminished but increased (cf. Thuc. 1.76). Nor was Athens alone in such oaths. When the inhabitants of Calymna united with the larger city-state of Cos about 204 B.C., they swore the oath required of all Coan citizens: not to allow the territory of the Coans to become smaller, but always to strive to increase that territory.⁴³ Other oaths of new army recruits (*ephēboi*), even in very small cities, begin by swearing eternal enmity to the state’s foreign enemies.⁴⁴ At the court of the Ptolemies, poets could urge the kings

40. Harris 1979: 118–20.

41. Sherwin White 1980: 177. Compare the formal hope of Antiochus III for increase (*ἐπαύξεισθαι*) at the city of Teos, here clearly meaning economic prosperity (Ma 2002: no. 17, lines 21–22); the formal hope of Queen Laodice for increase (*συνναύξεισθαι*) at the city of Iasus (Ma 2002: no. 26A, lines 10–12); the formal hope of the Seleucid official Zeuxis “to increase the city” (*ἐπαύξεισθαι τὴν πόλιν*) of Heraclea-under-Latmus (Ma 2002: no. 31 III, lines 14–15), or the public prayer of priests, magistrates, and chorus at Magnesia-on-the-Meander “for the safety of the city, the territory, the citizens, their wives, their children, the others living in the city and its territory, and for peace and wealth and the grain crop and the other crops and the cattle” (*Syll.*³: 589, lines 21–31).

42. Tod 1948: no. 202. Discussion: Eckstein 1987: xvi n. 16.

43. Schmitt 1969: no. 545, lines 26–27.

44. See *Syll.*³: 526 (Itanus), or *Syll.*³: 526 (Drerus).

not only to defend Egypt but to expand its territory and power (Theocr. *Id.* 17.83–93). Philip V, in a letter to the city of Larissa in 214, assumes the Larissans' automatic agreement in the assumption that to enlarge one's fatherland is a good thing.⁴⁵ At Carthage, the great general Mago was a dominant figure precisely because "he had by his talents enhanced the power, territory, and military glory of Carthage" (Justin 18.7.19). Polybius, as an Achaean, praises the decisions of Aristaenus and the Achaean Council in 198 B.C. because they gained the Achaean League not only safety but also a large increase in its power (*αὐξήσις*, 18.13.9); the increase is presented as a self-evident good. Polybius is unembarrassed and explicit in his satisfaction at the expansion of Achaean power as well (2.37.8 and 2.40.1–2), calling it "most splendid." In fact, Polybius thought it natural and glorious for any state to wish to grow in power, and to lead and dominate (6.50.3). Even more strikingly, he assumes that the ability of a state to grow in power internationally is a crucial index of the quality of its constitution and culture (6.48.6–8).⁴⁶

That attitude was widespread: hence Plutarch, who was not an Achaean, nevertheless explains the popularity of the statesman Aratus of Sicyon (fl. 230 B.C.) in Achaia on grounds that he put first not personal wealth or fame, nor even his own city, "but only the growth in power [*αὐξήσις*] of the Achaean League" (*Arat.* 24.4). The boast probably comes from Aratus's own *Memoirs*; Plutarch accepts the goal as natural and indeed worthy of praise.⁴⁷ Similarly Theocritus, a native of Syracuse, can unself-consciously write a poem fervently praying to the gods for the expansion of the power of Syracuse under King Hiero II—at least to extend Hiero's rule over all of Sicily, expelling the Carthaginians, and perhaps to expand much farther than that (*Id.* 16.73–103).⁴⁸

Thus it is clear that the prayer of the Roman censors every five years for increase looks exceptionally aggressive and imperialistic only if it is examined alone and in isolation. When it is compared with the ceremonies and attitudes existing in other ancient states contemporary to Rome, the censors' quinquennial prayer for increase appears a normal response to a brutal and dangerous world—or even rather mild and indirect.⁴⁹

45. *Syll.*³: 543, line 34.

46. Cf. the comments of Walbank 2002: 280.

47. See Porter 1937: 65.

48. Discussion: see Griffiths 1979: 36–44.

49. Thus Thucydides has the Corinthians urge the Spartans not to leave to their posterity a power less than they have received (1.72.7). Later he has Pericles make the same plea to the Athenians (1.144 and. 2.62.3; cf. also Demosth. *Phil.* 3.74). Herodotus (7.8)

Second, Harris stresses that at Rome the path to authority and influence in the present and glory for all time focused on military achievement—that is, on success in war. Great accomplishments in other fields traditional to the ancient Mediterranean, such as law, oratory, and literature, might bring a man some prestige but could not compete at Rome with victory won on the battlefield. The implication is that Roman culture was exceptional in such a harsh focus on war.⁵⁰

The approving attitude at Rome toward personal military achievement is certainly true, and it has a grim aspect. But the problem, once more, is that this cultural attitude was not uniquely Roman: that the great road to personal authority within the polity and to glory in the future was primarily through military accomplishment was an idea shared deeply by the Persians, the Greeks of both the Classical and the Hellenistic period, and the Carthaginians.

The head of the Achaemenid state valued at an exceptional level his aristocrats' bravery in combat and skill in warfare: Mardonius was advanced in the favor of the shah because "he was among the first in bravery in war and wisdom in council" (Nep. *Paus.* 1.2); Tiribazus was advanced in power because "he showed exceptional courage in war and gave the king judicious advice" (Diod. 15.10.3); Orontas was advanced to high position because "he was said to be among the best of the Persians in matters of war" (Xen. *Anab.* 1.6.1). Xerxes, watching the battle of Salamis in 480, is depicted as having his aides keep a list of those men who performed outstanding acts of bravery—intending them for great rewards and advancement (Hdt. 8.86–90). And in his idealized portrait of Cyrus the Younger, Xenophon writes approvingly:

It is a well-known fact that Cyrus honored in extraordinary ways those who proved brave in war. . . . Those whom he saw voluntarily exposing

attributes the same emotion to Shah Xerxes. Xenophon says that the city of Olynthus (a medium-sized power) has always striven for hegemony over the whole Chalcidice, because it is the biggest city there (*Hell.* 5.1.12); the Arcadians in the 360s (a medium-sized power) had similar expansive ambitions in the Peloponnese for similar reasons (*Hell.* 7.1.23–25); cf. also 7.1.33 on Thebes. Similarly, official hopes and prayers that the realm of Antiochus III would gain "all advantages" were widespread in the regions he controlled: see Ma 2002: no. 27, lines 1–5, from Iasus; cf. no. 18, line 3, from Teos; no. 24, lines 32–34, from Amyzon; and no. 13, lines 9 and 13–14, also from Amyzon and specifically praising Antiochus's soldiery for their accomplishments. Frederick the Great of Prussia asserted that from the smallest state to the largest, the principle of expansion was the fundamental law of all governments: Showalter 1994: 93–94; cf. Veyne 1975: 798. Scholars do not have to endorse this sentiment; the point is that it is a natural one in a militarized anarchy—and was an all-too-natural one in the militarized anarchy of the Hellenistic Mediterranean.

50. Harris 1979: 18–24. See, e.g., Sall. *Cat.* 1–3 and *Jug.* 2–4; Cic. *Mur.* 9.22–13.29.

themselves to danger he put in charge of the lands he conquered, and he honored them with additional gifts as well.

Cyrop. 1.9.14

These descriptions, though of Persia, all come from Greek writers—but they match the tone of Persian royal inscriptions themselves. Note, for instance, in the identical inscriptions at Naqsh-e Rostam of Shah Darius and Shah Xerxes, the direct connection drawn between personal courage and skill in war and dominating position and activity within the state:

I am trained [in war]. As a battle fighter I am a good battle fighter. . . . As a horseman I am a good horseman. As a Bowman I am a good Bowman, both afoot and on horseback. As a spearman I am a good spearman, both afoot and on horseback. And the skills that Ahura-Mazda has bestowed upon me, and I have the strength to use, by the favor of Ahura-Mazda—what has been done by me, I have done with these skills that Ahura-Mazda bestowed upon me.

There is thus no reason to doubt the fundamental accuracy of the Greek description of what was most valued among the aristocracy who ran the Persian empire.⁵¹

No Greek found the Persian customs strange; rather, Greek writers took the rewards given out in Persia to men who had risked their lives in combat and proven themselves in the management of war—rewards of high reputation, political office, and administrative responsibility—to be natural and praiseworthy. For this was the Greek cultural practice as well. Thus Plutarch takes it as obvious that the great Athenian tragedians—Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides—though they were the glory of Greek literature, had still not brought Athens advantage in a way comparable to the military achievements of Themistocles, Miltiades, Pericles, or Cimon (*Mor.* 348C–D). And the epitaph that Aeschylus supposedly wrote for himself famously mentions none of his dozens of plays, but only his role as a soldier in the Athenian victory at Marathon (Anon. *Life of Aeschylus* 11; Paus. 1.14.5). The Athenian pamphleteer called The Old Oligarch (420s B.C.) explains bitterly that it is only right that the poor and ordinary people in Athens, serving as sailors in the Athenian war fleets, should now have more power than the noble and the rich:

51. On this text and its ideological implications, see Briant 1999: 112; Kuhrt 2001: 109. The coins of Darius depict a warrior king who, armed with bow and spear, pursues a beaten enemy: Briant 1999: 112. On the high valuation of warrior qualities in Persian culture, and the large political rewards that accrued to bravery in the Persian state, see Briant 1999: 108–11.

“because it is these people who make the city powerful” (Ps.-Xen. 1.2). The poet Menander, writing 120 years later, was more direct: “it is in matters pertaining to war that a real man [*ἀνὴρ*] must outdo his rivals”.⁵²

Though we know less about Punic internal politics, military achievement appears to have been the primary road to political power at Carthage as well. At the end of the sixth century the commander called Malchus was leader of Carthage because of his conquests both in Sicily and in Africa (Justin 18.7.1), and the same large military reputation was the political foundation for his successor, Mago (18.7.19–19.1.1), and for Mago’s contemporary the great general Hasdrubal (19.1.6–7; he was able to pass his political leadership on to his sons: 19.2.3). In the fifth century Hamilcar was the leading figure in Carthage because of his military successes. The ferocious competition among the Punic aristocracy over who would lead the war against the rebel mercenaries (241–238 B.C.) demonstrates once again the link between prospective military success and ambition for political power; and of course this was the age of Hamilcar Barca and his son Hannibal, whose political foundation once again rested on their striking military successes. So did the political influence of Hamilcar Barca’s competitor Hanno, who had large conquests in Africa to his credit (Polyb. 1.73.1). Conversely Himilco, the last of the Magonids, performed humiliating public penances at Carthage (including wearing a slave’s rags) for suffering severe defeat in Sicily around 400—and then committed suicide.⁵³

The reason for the primacy of military accomplishment in Greek thinking (as in Persian and Punic thinking) is obvious: in a violent world the polity must first of all be safe. Those who bring it safety and security are honored. Only if those conditions are met does high culture (as in the Greek case) have a chance to thrive. This was a well-known maxim: “Men of peace are not safe unless flanked by men of action” (Pericles at Thuc. 2.63.3).⁵⁴ Kurt Raaflaub’s conclusion about the Greeks’ view of military accomplishment is the same as Harris’s conclusion about Rome, and it puts the

52. Menander frg. 560 Körte; cf. the comments of Rahe 1984: 271.

53. On Malchus, Mago, Hasdrubal, and Himilco, see conveniently Lancel 1997: 112–14. The disputes over the generalship during the Mercenary War: see now Hoyos 2003: chaps. 3 and 4 (with sources).

54. According to an inscription of Darius I at Persepolis, the first duty of the shah is to protect the land and people of the Persians from the ravages of invasion by enemy armies: see Briant 1999: 111. Of course, the Persians also believed that the best way to achieve this goal was through the continuous external expansion of their own military and political power: see Hdt. 7.8.

latter's conclusion into proper perspective: "With few exceptions, military accomplishments were seen as the only way to acquire eternal fame."⁵⁵

Third, Harris, Stephen Oakley, and Thomas Weidemann stress the fact that the Roman state gave special recognition and rewards to aristocrats for acts of personal valor in battle, including the *spolia opima* for personally killing an enemy commander in single combat. This is presented as an indication of the exceptional bloodthirstiness of Roman Republican culture.⁵⁶

The Romans certainly had an elaborate system of honoring military bravery, especially bravery displayed by senatorial aristocrats.⁵⁷ But single combat between commanders and/or the honoring of commanders fighting in the battle line was usual in the warlike cultures of the ancient Mediterranean. It was a powerful tradition among the Persians: Shah Darius I on the Behistun Inscription describes at length his sterling qualities in personal combat; the story was that Artaxerxes II during the battle of Cunaxa in 401 personally killed the pretender to the throne, his own brother, Cyrus. The man who became Darius III allegedly first attracted the attention of Shah Artaxerxes III (ca. 350) by defeating and killing in single combat a rebel leader, and was rewarded with a governorship; Spithridates the governor of Lydia dueled Alexander the Great in man-to-man combat at the battle of the Granicus in 334; four years later the Iranian general Satibarzanes challenged Alexander's general Erigyus in single combat in Aria, in front of both armies.⁵⁸ Among the Greeks the tradition went back to Homer: the *Iliad* is one long tale of aristocratic man-to-man combat, occasionally in front of the assembled armies, but mostly in the battle line (yet still in what we may term aristocratic duels).⁵⁹ In the Classical period it was usual for Greek generals to fight in

55. Raaflaub 2001: 312–13 (quote from 313). Military achievement was the great road to political power at Carthage as well, as numerous cases prove: see above, chap. 5, text at n. 200; and text above at n. 53 (this chapter).

56. Harris 1979: 38–39; Oakley 1985: 392–410, cf. Oakley 1993: 30.

57. See Polyb. 6.39, with Eckstein 1997: 184–85.

58. Shah Darius's military skills as depicted on the Behistun Inscription: Briant 1999: 111; as depicted at Naqsh-e Rostam: text above at n. 51; Artaxerxes II and Cyrus II: Plut. *Artax.* 14.1–10 and 15–16; Darius III: Diod. 17.6 and Just. 10. 3, with Nylander 1993: 147–48; Spithridates: Diod. 17.20.1; Satibarzanes: Diod. 17.83.4–6; Curt. 7.4.32–38.

59. See van Wees 1986. The Homeric model is noted by Oakley 1985: 402. It is possible that the Satibarzanes story as it appears in Diodorus and Curtius (see above) is elaborated from what was actually a duel between Satibarzanes and Erigyus that occurred in the general melee of battle (so Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.4.32–38, with the comments of Briant 1999: 111)—which shows that for ancient writers, it is the aristocratic duel, not its specific setting, that is paramount in interest.

the infantry ranks, especially in the front line, at the center of battle—and sometimes they died there. We have the names of at least thirty Classical Greek commanding generals who died fighting in combat: often when their forces were defeated, but occasionally even when their armies were victorious. Such men were viewed as heroes.⁶⁰

This Greek tradition was very much alive—as Homer’s poetry was—in the Hellenistic age. Thus in the 360s the Elean general Stomius killed in a famous single combat the general commanding the Sicyonian army; the Eleans set up at Olympia a monument glorifying Stomius. Alexander the Great not only battled with the satrap Spithridates at the Granicus, but sought single combat with Darius III himself at Issus in 333 and again at Gaugamela in 331. (Darius allegedly ran away.) Alexander’s general Erigyius, of course, was perfectly willing to duel the Persian commander Satibarzanes in front of both assembled armies. (Erigyius killed him.) A famous story from the generation of Alexander’s Successors was the single combat to the death between the great generals Neoptolemus and Eumenes (first with spears on horseback, then with swords on foot). In this period Seleucus the future king personally killed Nicanor the Macedonian governor of Media in another famous battlefield duel (App. *Syr.* 55), while Alexander’s favorite general, Craterus, was killed in the battle line, “having slain many foes” (Plut. *Eum.* 7.3). Pyrrhus the king of Epirus in the 280s and 270s was another lover of single combat even when in the role of commander in chief. Acrotatus the prince of Sparta returned from battle in 274 literally soaked in the blood of his victims—to huge public approbation, Plutarch says, from Sparta’s old men and Sparta’s women (*Pyrrh.* 28.2–3). King Hiero II of Syracuse (fl. 250) was famous as the victorious veteran of many single combats (Just. 23.4.12). And around 200 both King Antiochus III and King Philip V were famed for their courage and skill in man-to-man combat.⁶¹

Hellenistic kings were the most famous warriors, but the custom included elected public officials. Philopoemen, one of Polybius’s great heroes,

60. See Hanson 1989: chap. 9, esp. the list at 113–14; cf. Ridley 1979: 513–14.

61. The monument to Stomius: Paus. 6.3.2. Alexander vs. Spithridates: Diod. 17.20.1. Alexander and Darius: Nylander 1993: 148–53. Erigyius vs. Satibarzanes: Diod. 17.83.4–6 (note Diodorus’s approving tone); Curt. 7.4.32–38. Neoptolemus vs. Eumenes (the latter won): Diod. 18.31 and Plut. *Eum.* 7.4–8, with Beston 2000: 323 and 327. Pyrrhus of Epirus: Plut. *Pyrrh.* 7.5 (with spears, then swords, against the opposing commander), 28.4, 34.1–2; an early Roman view of Pyrrhus’s personal ferocity: Enn. *Ann.* 183–86. Antiochus III: Polyb. 10.49 (to Polybius’s great approval). Philip V: Livy 27.32–33; 31.24.10–16; 31.37.9.

slew the Elean cavalry general Damophantus in single combat in 209 while general of the Achaean League cavalry; then, as commander in chief of the entire Achaean army in 207, he slew the Spartan tyrant Machanidas—galloping along the battle line at Mantinea in eager search of him. The Achaeans greatly honored Philopoemen for this deed, setting up a bronze equestrian statue of him at Delphi. In 210 the Tarentine general Nikon personally slew the Roman admiral D. Quinctius in a sea battle off the Italian coast—and the Tarentines established an annual festival to honor him. We have already noted that both Hamilcar Barca and Hannibal himself fought in battle in the front line, while one of Hannibal's generals was a Carthaginian noble whose nickname was Monomachus—the lover of single combat. Indeed, the historian Polybius himself was not averse to combat in the battle line—even at the age of 55.⁶²

Oakley argues that aristocratic single combat among the Greeks is “comparatively sparse” after the *Iliad* and that this points a contrast to the more bellicose Romans; but this is simply not consonant with the facts.⁶³ Greek commanders—like Persian, Punic, and Roman commanders—led their men into battle and fought in the front ranks, and single combat among generals was a widespread phenomenon of the Hellenistic age, winning deep public approval and formal commemoration for the winner, just as in Rome.

The tradition of single combat among aristocratic commanders was also widespread among the Celts, with whom the Romans had continuous and ferocious contact for two centuries after 390.⁶⁴ It has even been suggested that the Romans adapted the custom of single combat from the Celts;⁶⁵ but its existence among the Latins as well as among Campanians suggests that the custom was independently Italic.⁶⁶ More likely, the experience with the Celtic custom helped keep the Roman custom alive. In any case, the majority of known aristocratic single combats at Rome are between Romans and Celts—but note that it is the Celtic aristocrats who are (allegedly) always the challengers. Indeed, in our sources

62. Philopoemen in 209 and 207: Plut. *Philop.* 7.6–7 and 10.5–8; Polyb. 11.17–18. Nikon: Livy 26.39. Hamilcar, Hannibal, and the ferocious Punic general Monomachus: see text above at n. 200 (with sources). Polybius in the battle line: Amm. Marc. 24.2.16–17. Note Polybius's warm approval of the courageous deaths in battle of the Greek generals Epaminondas, Pelopidas, Brasidas, and Cleombrotus: frg. 139 B–W, with Eckstein 1995: 36.

63. Oakley 1985: 402–3. Cf. Harris 1979: 38–39.

64. See esp. Diod. 5.29.2–3, probably based on the eyewitness Posidonius.

65. So Bayet and Bloch 1968: 109; Niraudeau 1976: 692.

66. Oakley 1985: 405 (with sources).

in general the Romans are the ones challenged to aristocratic duels, and are not the challengers.⁶⁷

Thus, as with our discussion, above, of the alleged existence of an exceptionally intense Roman ideology of expansion, it turns out that the Roman customs honoring aristocratic bravery in single combat are evidence of intense militarism, but not of exceptionally intense militarism. Such customs must be placed in a broader Hellenistic culture of militarism and warrior achievement predominant throughout the Mediterranean and extending into Celtic Europe. Rome honored bravery in man-to-man combat, especially by commanders; and so did everyone else. It was a natural consequence of the almost constant warfare. Our Hellenistic Greek sources on such actions by kings and generals all depict them very approvingly, and denote them as heroic. "Battle," Homer said, "is where men win glory" (*Il.* 4.225).⁶⁸ As Polybius says in what he views as an incontrovertible statement concerning the education of all aristocratic young men: "It is necessary that every branch of virtue be practiced by those who aim at a good education; and the training should be from childhood—but training in physical courage is the most important" (6.11a.11).⁶⁹

Fourth, Polybian or Polybian-derived descriptions of Roman violence are sometimes seen as demonstrating that Roman soldiers and methods of warfare were exceptionally horrific, not just in modern but also in ancient terms. Three passages are most often cited. Harris concludes that "the regular harshness of Roman war-methods sprang from an unusually pronounced willingness to use violence against alien peoples."⁷⁰ Roman attitudes were indeed bellicose, and Roman methods of war were certainly violent. But were Roman attitudes here, and Roman methods of war, unusually violent? None of the passages usually cited can bear the weight that has been put on them.

To begin with, Polybius remarks that the Romans strongly believe that their *βία* can conquer anything (1.37.7): the word is often translated here

67. Most known examples of Roman single combat fought against Gauls or Celtiberians: Oakley 1985: 400 (evidence: 394–96). Gauls as the challengers: Livy 7.9.7; 7.26.1; Polyb. 35.5.1; App. *Civ.* 1.50.219–20; [Hirt.] *Gall.* 8.48. Germano-Gallic warriors as challengers: Front. *Strat.* 4.7.5. Latins as challengers: Livy 8.7.4–7. Campanians as challengers: Livy 23.46.12–47.8. Jews as challengers: Jos. *BJ* 6.169.

68. The generally approving tone of our Greek sources: Beston 2000: 325–28 and esp. n. 70. The widespread impact of Homeric ideals of conduct, virtues "largely related to success in war and battle": Lendon 2000: 3–4. On Polybius's Homeric values, see already Eckstein 1995: esp. 28, 55, 110–11.

69. See Eckstein 1995: 149–50. Note also Plautus's declaration at *Amph.* 649–50 (ca. 200 B.C.): "Courage stands before everything: it is what maintains and protects our liberty, safety [*salus*], life, homes, parents, country, children." Again—incontrovertible.

70. Harris 1979: 50–51.

as “violence.” This alleged Polybian reference to exceptional Roman violence is in fact the culminating argument in Harris’s influential discussion of Roman violence and ferocity.⁷¹ But the rest of Polybius’s remark in 1.37, and the context of that remark, shows that Polybius is not discussing Roman warlikeness or savagery at all. The context is not war, or battle, or siege, or foreign relations; it is the determination of Roman admirals to ride out severe storms at sea despite the wise advice of Greek pilots to put into port (1.37.3–4). And Polybius’s commentary on Roman reliance on *βία* here is that “they consider that having set themselves a task they are bound to carry it through, and they think nothing is impossible once they have decided upon it” (1.37.7). Thus Polybius here is clearly talking about Roman determination or stubbornness, not about Roman violence; he condemns such stubbornness in this case as displaying “lack of judgment” (*ἀβουλία*, 1.37.6, cf. 1.37.4). This very sentence in 1.37.7 equates Roman *βία* with Roman *ὁρμή*, that is, “spirit”—in this case, the spirit of determination. And the moral Polybius draws from the incident is that confronting storms at sea with sheer “will power” often leads the Romans to disastrous shipwreck (1.37.4 and 6–10).⁷²

Another passage often emphasized is Livy’s depiction (based on Polybian material) of a cavalry battle between Romans and Macedonians in 199 B.C., at the start of the Second Macedonian War. Livy writes that when the Macedonians saw the terrible wounds created by the heavy swords used by the Roman cavalrymen, and the dismembered corpses of their fellows, they were filled with fear at the prospect of having to fight “against such weapons and such men” (31.34.4). “Such weapons,” “such men”: these are alleged to be evidence of a Roman savagery and love of war exceptional even among ancient peoples.⁷³ Yet the swords with which the Romans dealt such terrible wounds were not Roman swords; Livy says they were the type of sword used by Spanish warriors, now used by the Romans (*gladio Hispaniensi*: 31.34.4). That is: the Romans had copied this weapon from the fearsome enemies they themselves had long fought in the barbarian West.⁷⁴

71. Harris 1979: 53. So too Rawson 1986: 423; and now Campbell 2002: 167.

72. Cf. Eckstein 1997: 179. To judge from Polyb. 1.22.1, 1.23.1 and 1.24.1, Fabius Pictor evidently emphasized determination in the face of initial setbacks as a special Roman cultural quality: see the comments of Dillery 2002: 7.

73. See Harris 1979: 51, and now Campbell 2002: 169 and n. 7 (based on Harris). Polybian derivation of Livy 31.34: see Briscoe 1973: 140.

74. Noted by Briscoe 1973: 140. In Diodorus’s version of this battle (probably also drawn from Polybian material), Philip’s men panic at the wounds caused by the Spanish swords, but the king himself does not (Diod. 28.8).

As for fighting “against such men,” Polybius certainly thought of the Romans as good soldiers, especially when fighting for their Italian homeland (6.52.6–10), and he certainly recorded (with great approval) exceptional acts of Roman bravery. Moreover, the Romans themselves could claim they were “as brave as the sky is deep” (Enn. *Ann.* 470).⁷⁵ But in most of Polybius’s detailed accounts of battle he does not talk much about Roman ferocity; and at 6.24.9 he stresses the Roman admiration for steadiness and calm in battle, explicitly against sheer ferocity. Polybius’s understanding of the ideals of Roman culture here is borne out by Caesar himself: steadiness, obedience, and self-control—not the exaltations of *animus*—were best for soldiers.⁷⁶ Indeed, the fact is that Polybius simply did not think the Romans were the most ferocious soldiers in the world. According to him, they were just as subject to low morale, to wavering in battle, to panic, and to sheer laziness as were most other Hellenistic soldieries.⁷⁷

Furthermore, the Roman campaign of 199 against the Macedonians, which we are discussing, despite being conducted with “such weapons and such men,” was inconclusive, and the commanding general (the experienced P. Sulpicius Galba) ended up back on the Adriatic coast exactly where he had begun. And the next year (198) the Macedonian infantry phalanx defeated the Roman army outright in a set-piece battle at Atrax in Thessaly. After Atrax, Polybius evidently depicted the new Roman commander against Macedon, T. Quinctius Flamininus, as now “most reluctant to suffer a comparison of men and weapons to be made”—thus he gave up the year’s campaign (Livy 32.18.1, from Polybian material). This later Livian passage should serve as an important counterpoint to the overused Livy 31.34.4.⁷⁸

It is clear, in fact, whom Polybius believed to be the best natural soldiers in the world, the most ferocious in every situation, both in attack and in defense, on land as well as at sea (as marines): not the Romans but the Macedonians. The Macedonians, he says, go to war as if to a

75. Polybian examples of Roman courage: the Roman assault on the walls of New Carthage, a very difficult operation (Polyb. 10.13.6–10), or, from the legendary period, the story of Horatius at the bridge (6.55). On the Ennius passage, see Lind 1972: 236–39.

76. See esp. Cae. *BG* 5.34–35; 7.45–52; *BC* 1.58, 2.4; 2.41; 3.6; 3.41; cf. Hirt. *BG* 8.31, with the discussion of Lendon 1999: 299–300 and 306–8.

77. Detailed discussion in Eckstein 1997: 177–82. Examples: Polyb. 3.90.3–4; 3.107.4–5; Livy 37.43.1–3; 44.12.3 and 13.6 (all from Polybian material). Once more, Caesar agreed with Polybius; though proud of his men’s courage, he also saw their morale as fragile: Cae. *BG* 4.33; 6.39; 7.28; *BC* 1.144–45 and esp. 3.72; *BAfr* 29, with the comments of Lendon 1999: 295–97, 323.

78. Philip could regard the campaign of 199 as “a qualified success”: Walbank 1940: 147. Derivation of Livy 32.18.1, the judgment on the battle of Atrax in 198, from Polybian material: Briscoe 1973: 1.

banquet (5.2.6); no wonder that, as we have just seen, Polybius evidently had the Roman general Flaminius thinking his own men inferior (Livy 32.18.1). Further, it appears that Polybius gave his audience at least a partial explanation for the exceptional nature of Macedonian ferocity and warlikeness: the harshness and poverty of much of Macedon was responsible, along with the exposure of Macedon to both the destructive raids and the brutalizing cultural influence of barbarian neighbors to the north and northwest (Livy 45.30.7, from Polybian material). A good portion of the Macedonian population, then, was in Polybius's opinion simply "more ferocious" than ordinary men (*ferociores*: *ibid.*). That includes being more ferocious than Romans.⁷⁹

The other passage widely employed by scholars to allege exceptional Roman bellicosity and ferocity is Polybius's description of the Roman sack of New Carthage in Spain in 209.⁸⁰ Polybius's account is certainly stunning: once the walls of New Carthage were breached, P. Cornelius Scipio ordered the slaughter of the civilian population, sparing no one until he called a halt to it; then began the organized looting of the city. Polybius comments:

I suppose the purpose of this custom is to strike terror. One can often see in cities captured by the Romans not only human beings who have been slaughtered, but even dogs sliced in two and the limbs of other animals cut off.

Polyb. 10.15.4–6

This passage has become famous—because of the frequency with which modern scholars refer to it. Yet it should be compared to a less famous passage from Diodorus, describing the Carthaginian sack of the Greek city of Selinus in Sicily in 409:

They scattered through the city, plundering whatever was found of value in the dwellings, while of the inhabitants, some they burned with their houses, others they slaughtered wherever they found them on the streets, making no distinction of gender or age, but putting them all to the sword, infants, women, old men—never showing a shred of compassion. They made their way around the city with severed hands strung around their bodies, and severed heads spitted on their spears. . . . By nightfall the entire city had been

79. See Eckstein 1997: 180–81. Polybian derivation of Livy 45.30: Nissen 1862: 276. Note how this passage parallels Polybius's discussion (extant in 4.20–21) of how the harsh physical environment of his own native Arcadia has created a harsh Arcadian culture. A contemporary Roman view of Macedonian warlikeness: Enn. *Ann.* 198.

80. Polyb. 10.15–17; see, e.g., Harris 1979: 51–52; Hopkins, 1983: 207; and now Campbell 2002: 170.

burned to the ground and everywhere was filled with blood and corpses; the number of the dead was said to be sixteen thousand.

Diod. 13.57.2–6

There is a similar description of savage Carthaginian behavior at the sack of Himera—including the public torture and then execution of three thousand male captives (Diod. 13.62). In fact, the Carthaginians were more famous in antiquity for military cruelty than were the Romans.⁸¹ As for the Greeks in Italy, we have the famous case of Sybaris in 511 B.C.:

The soldiers of Croton in their anger decided to spare no one. They killed all those who fell into their power. They cut down the majority of the Sybarites, and then plundered the city and made it a total wasteland.

Diod. 12.10.1

There is a terrible story behind these few words.

What was unique to Polybius was not the brutal manner in which Romans sacked cities that they captured: the Romans were brutal (10.15.4–5), and Polybius knew they had committed many atrocities. But Polybius also knew that such events were horrific in general. Consider his account of the savage attack on his native city of Megalopolis in 223 by the Spartans under King Cleomenes III: those Megalopolitans who were not killed in the fighting were turned into penniless refugees (2.5.2–6, cf. 60.11); and Cleomenes, “on possessing himself of the city, destroyed it with such systematic cruelty and animosity that no one would have thought it possible that it could ever be reinhabited” (2.5.5.7; cf. Paus. 8.27.6). The general thrust of Polybius’s comments on the sack of New Carthage (10.15–17) is in fact not on Roman violence. Polybius indicates that it was terrible, but such terrible violence was not unusual in his world; what was unusual was how well organized and disciplined the Romans were as they went about their looting (10.16.1–17.6). The latter discussion is far longer than his remarks on Roman brutality. The high level of Roman organization in looting impressed Polybius in military terms because of the wild and fierce conduct of Hellenistic Greek armies when those armies went looting in cities they had captured, wild

81. Note Hannibal’s order to kill all adults who were met as his army marched down through eastern Italy in 217 (Polyb. 1.86.10–11)—a story dismissed as anti-Punic propaganda by Huss 1985: 319 n. 186, but accepted by Hoyos 2003: 116–17; or Hannibal’s slaughter of the population of Gerunium in Apulia (because of resistance) after his army took it by assault, winter 217/216: Polyb. 3.100.4, accepted by Hoyos 2003: 117. Other instances of Punic atrocity: see Diod. 14.4.2; Polyb. 1.11.5; App. *Pun.* 24; Plut. *Mor.* 799D; Zon. 8.11 and 17, with discussion in Erskine 2000: 170 and nn. 20 and 21.

indiscipline that sometimes led to successful counterattacks by the enemy (17.1–5). To Polybius, the Romans seemed more cautious—and more organized. Here he was pointing out a special Roman characteristic, one that gave the Romans a special advantage in the interstate competition. But that characteristic was not (despite many scholars) exceptional Roman violence and brutality; it was exceptional Roman organization.⁸²

Fifth, there is the Roman horse-racing festival every spring, dedicated to the war god Mars and evidently intended to symbolize the exercise of war horses after their winter rest (the *Equirria*, February 27 and March 15), and then the annual sacrifice of a war horse every autumn, again to Mars, to purify the army after the warfare season (the *Equus October*, October 15). For Harris, the annual occurrence of these festivals is proof of the Roman expectation that war would be a regular event, and hence evidence of Rome's exceptional belligerence toward the outside world. Indeed, these festivals are pointed out on the first page of Harris's exposition of Rome's specially belligerent customs and attitudes.⁸³

The worship of Mars, of course, was not unique to Rome, but common to the Italic peoples among whom the early Romans lived. It was a worship paralleling in many ways the Greek worship of the war god Ares.⁸⁴ Similarly, Polybius indicates that the annual sacrifice of a war horse was a custom widespread among all non-Greek peoples: the Romans were not unique in that respect (12.4b.3). But even more importantly, we know that the Macedonians (Greeks or semi-Greeks, depending on your point of view) engaged in a similar festival, a war-horse sacrifice to the warrior hero Xanthus every spring, before the beginning of the campaigning season.⁸⁵ Briscoe, in critiquing Harris, has briefly pointed out the Macedonian festival, but more can be said.⁸⁶ The Macedonian festival was far more gruesome than the Roman one: it began with the assembled army marching between the two halves of a slaughtered dog

82. See Eckstein 1995: 167. Polybius indicated that at New Carthage the vast majority of the population in fact survived and in the end were comparatively well treated (10.17.7–16). Roman atrocities against civilians in cities taken by siege: Ausonia in 314, Saepinum in 293, Henna in 214, Tarentum in 209, Antipatrea in 200, Corinth in 146; see Bederman 2001: 256 (with sources). Even so, the Romans in the Middle Republic rarely perpetrated anything like the slaughter the Carthaginians inflicted on Himera (above).

83. Harris 1979: 9 and n. 3. Description of the Roman horse festivals: Scullard 1981: 82, 89, 193–94.

84. On the worship of Mars (Mamers) throughout central Italy: Salmon 1967: 108; 159 n. 4 (Umbrians), 167–68 and 171 (Sabines and Samnites, including Mamertini, Marsi, Marrucini). Widespread Greek worship of Ares (and of Athena in her violent aspects): Deacy 2000: 285–98.

85. See Polyb. 23.10.17; Livy 40.6.1–6 (from Polybian material); Curtius 10.9.11–15.

86. Briscoe 1980: 86.

(Livy 40.6.1; Curtius 10.9.12), and the dog may be a substitute for what was originally a human sacrifice.⁸⁷ And whereas the spring festival at Rome merely involved horse racing, the spring festival in Macedon involved both a spectacular animal sacrifice at its start, and then armed mock combat on a mass scale (Livy 40.6.5–6)—a strong indication of what the Macedonian expectations were regarding the occurrence of war in the upcoming campaigning season. The Roman festival in the autumn involved some mock combat too—but not between fully armed and armored men nor on a fully mass scale, and the more realistic Macedonian mock combat occurred precisely during the period when the possibility of war was being determined, not as a purification after fighting was over, as was the Roman case.⁸⁸

This helps once more to put the Roman customs into perspective. The Roman war-horse festivals for Mars have a belligerent aura, and indicate an expectation of annual war, but the Romans are not alone in holding such festivals, nor were their annual war-horse sacrifices the most bloody and violent, nor did they occur at the most significant time of the year in terms of determining war. The Romans partook here of a belligerent religious custom, but the custom was widespread (Polyb. 12.4b.3). In fact, belligerent religious customs of all sorts were widespread in the ancient Mediterranean. That is not surprising, given the prevailing militarized anarchy.⁸⁹

Again, H.-J. Gehrke has recently asserted that Rome was unusual among ancient states in its implacable perseverance in warfare until victory was achieved, even at the cost of enormous effort and losses, and that this obstinacy was caused by an unusual “anthropological syndrome” involving the citizen soldiers’ total identification with the honor of the Roman state and community, as well as with the psychological need to arrive at victory so as not to shake belief in the favor of the gods for Rome. This unique syndrome intensified “the bellicosity of a warlike people.” The example Gehrke employs is Roman conduct in the First Punic War (264–241), and this is then made the basis of a general rule.⁹⁰

The use here of the First Punic War should, however, immediately give

87. Walbank 1979: 233–34.

88. On the “football scrimmage” mock battle between the inhabitants of the Suburra and the Via Sacra neighborhoods in Rome during the *Equus October*, see Scullard 1981: 193.

89. Note at Athens the annual ritual that women performed for success for their men in war (part of the Thesmophoria), and the annual state gift of war equipment to orphans as they reached adulthood (part of the Greater Dionysia): Raaflaub 2001: 107 and n. 75 (with sources).

90. Gehrke 2002: 153–71, esp. 167–70.

us pause. The focus is on Roman behavior alone—as if only Roman behavior in the war needs to be explained. Yet Carthage, too, persisted in this war, despite suffering terrible defeats and losses, and with similar obstinacy. Indeed, Polybius—our best source on the war—equates the obstinacy of the two states (1.58.7–8). Earlier, he had expressed admiration for Carthaginian obstinacy in not making a compromise peace in winter 256/255 even when the military situation seemed hopeless (1.31.5–8). This same obstinacy was displayed by both Carthage and Rome during the Second Punic War—which lasted seventeen years (218–201).⁹¹

The Romans certainly were obstinate in war, and this despite suffering severe defeats in battle. But the example of Carthage shows the danger of focusing on Roman behavior alone. Obstinacy in war was characteristic of many ancient Mediterranean states—and the total identification of citizen soldiers of city-states with their polity and its interests was a characteristic of most ancient city-states, not just in the Classical period but in the Hellenistic age as well.⁹² As for obstinacy, the Spartan conquest of Messenia began with a war that took twenty years (ca. 736–716 B.C.) and was followed by suppression of frequent bloody rebellions (until ca. 600). In this same period the Lelantine War between the city-states of Chalcis and Eretria on Euboea lasted twenty years, and eventually involved many poleis on both sides (ca. 700), while in Asia Minor the great Greek city of Miletus fought a war with the Kingdom of Lydia that lasted twelve years (and note that Herodotus praises the Milesians for their steadfastness). Corinth from 435 was involved in war for the next thirty years, first with Corcyra, then with Athens and the Delian League (including Corcyra): defeat on both land and sea at the hands of Corcyra in 435 served only to enflame Corinthian anger (Thuc. 1.31.1), and in 421 Corinth—even after other serious losses—bitterly opposed a compromise peace with Athens and her allies (5.30.2). Conversely, the Athenian citizenry persisted in this war even after the disasters in Sicily in 415–413, and later refused to make a compromise peace with Sparta in 407 when—through extraordinary efforts—they had managed to restore a military balance of power. The Achaean League, defeated repeatedly by Sparta in the 220s, persisted until victorious—even at the cost of a coalition with its arch-enemy, Macedon. The majority of the male citizenry of military age of Polybius's home town of Megalopolis were killed fighting on the battlefield against the Spartans in the early 220s (2.55.2), and the city

91. On Polybius's praise of Punic obstinacy in war, see Eckstein 1995: 62–63.

92. Noted briefly by Gehrke 2002: 154; see esp. Ma 2000: 342–49.

itself was destroyed (2.55.7), yet what was left of Megalopolitan manhood still fought victoriously under their own commander against the Spartans at Sellasia in 222 (2.65.3). The Aetolian League, having lost one war against Philip V in 220–217, initiated a new war with Roman help in 211, and fought on against Philip even after Roman aid became minimal, refusing to make a compromise peace until Macedonian forces invaded and ravaged the Aetolian homeland (206). Yet in 199 the Aetolians were ready for another round with Macedon, joining Rome again, this time in a victorious campaign for which they claimed major credit.⁹³ But the most extreme cases are the Phocians in the 480s and the Acarnanians after 211: the Acarnanian male citizens sent their women and children into safekeeping and resolved to conquer their enemies the Aetolians or die on the battlefield; the Phocian male citizens resolved to conquer their enemies the Thessalians or die on the battlefield—and arranged the slaughter of their women and children if they lost. Both cases are received not with shock but with praise and admiration by Polybius. Under such circumstances, how far Roman obstinacy in war sharply differentiates Rome from other ancient states is highly questionable.⁹⁴

Finally, the Roman triumph. During the Middle Republic, the Senate granted dozens of triumphal processions to victorious generals. In these processions the general, adorned with symbols indicative of royalty or perhaps even deity, and followed by his army laden with spoils, marched through the city of Rome from the city gates up to sacrifice at the great temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline Hill—the high point of glory in any man's life. These spectacular and, it seems, almost continual Roman celebrations of military success are viewed by many scholars as crucial evidence of exceptional Roman brutality and bellicosity. They are also used as evidence of the Roman war machine grinding out in Schumpeteresque fashion the public victories that the aristocracy needed in order to preserve its prestige and authority within Roman society.⁹⁵

The statistics on the senatorial granting of triumphs can, however, be

93. Spartan conquest of Messenia: see conveniently Sealey 1976: 66–67. The Lelantine War is known only from Hdt. 5.99 and Thuc. 1.15.3; see Hornblower 1997: 49. The war between Lydia and Miletus: Hdt. 1.17–22. Corinthian obstinacy after 435: see above, chap. 3, text at n. 51. Athenian obstinacy after 413: Sealey 355–58 and 369–79; Achaean obstinacy with Sparta: Eckstein 1995: 198–99; Aetolian obstinacy with Macedon: Eckstein 2002.

94. The Acarnanians: Polyb. 9.40.4–6 and Livy 26.25; the Phocians: Polyb. 16.32.1. See Eckstein 1995: 47–48.

95. Harris 1979: 25, 28, 29, and Harris 1984: 14; Oakley 1993: 29; cf. in general Raafaub et al. 1992: 27 and 29; Cornell 1995: 365; Raafaub 1996: 278 and 296; Gehrke 2002: 168.

interpreted to mean that they were not granted wholesale or mindlessly, but only after careful consideration of real accomplishments against real and proven threats.⁹⁶ Even more importantly, however, the Roman custom of victory spectacles needs once again to be put in the context of the Mediterranean-wide customs regarding state celebrations of military victory.

Though the Roman Republic celebrated major victories via public processions far more regularly than other Hellenistic states did, the Romans were not the only society in the Mediterranean to celebrate victory with spectacular public ceremonies. We hear of very extreme Greek acts here, revealing the savage joy with which victory could be celebrated: Themistocles' alleged public sacrifice of Persian nobles to Dionysus the Eater of Flesh after the Greek victory at Salamis in 480 (Plut. *Them.* 13.2, cf. *Arist* 9.1–2), or the display of the severed head of the enemy general Onesilus above the gate of the city of Amathus in Cyprus (Hdt. 5.114)—or the Achaeans' display of the severed head of the Spartan ruler Machanidas after their victory at Mantinea in 207 (Polyb. 11.18.6–8, certainly historical).⁹⁷

And there are several Greek customs that parallel the Roman triumph itself. The Greek victory over the Persians at Plataea in 479 was celebrated via a victory procession held by the Plataeans every year for six hundred years (except when Plataea itself had been destroyed by fellow Greeks: Plut. *Arist.* 21.3–5). Similarly, at Athens the anniversaries of Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea, and of Mantinea (418) and Naxos (376), were celebrated in dramatic victory ceremonies held every year for several centuries (Plut. *Mor.* 349F). Some Hellenistic kings expressed the royal obsession with victory ideology (on which see above, chapter 4) via magnificent military processions. The most famous are the fantastic procession of Ptolemy II in 279 B.C., which involved over eighty thousand troops, including twenty-three thousand cavalry—far larger than any Roman triumph of the Middle Republic—and the procession of Antiochus IV in 166 to celebrate his victory over Egypt in the Sixth

96. See Rich 1993: 49–53. To judge from the list of triumphal requests and senatorial grants in Pelikan-Pittenger 1998, the Senate gave unqualified and quick approval for a triumph only in about 36% of the cases where a triumph was requested. This certainly shows an aristocratic eagerness for triumphs—but also a strong senatorial push to grant triumphs only when seriously deserved in the face of significant foreign threats.

97. Compare, for ferocity, the story that as consul in 217 C. Flaminius adorned his helmet with an enemy scalp (Sil. Ital. *Pun.* 5.132–34)—or that the Romans catapulted the severed head of the general Hasdrubal into his brother Hannibal's encampment: Livy 27.51.11.

Syrian War, a procession that included nearly fifty thousand troops and forty-two war elephants: again, much larger than any Roman triumph. F. W. Walbank's conclusion is that "such processions are a great feature of the Hellenistic courts."⁹⁸ Nor were such spectacular victory processions limited to monarchies. Philopoemen's funeral procession in 183/182 consisted of the entire Achaean army marching in full armor, dragging along captives from the recent war against Messenia in which the heroic Achaean general had been killed—a spectacular mixture, as Plutarch says, of triumphal rites and funeral rites (*Philop.* 21.2: ἐπινίκιον πομπήν τινα).⁹⁹ In fact, among the Greek city-state republics there appears to have been a widespread custom of triumphal return of the victorious army into its city (though not with the elaborateness of a Roman triumph), and at Athens in the fourth century there was also a custom of large public banquets in the city center following the army's triumphal return, in conjunction with thanksgiving sacrifices.¹⁰⁰ Late fourth-century wall paintings from Italic Capua south of Rome depict a somewhat similar theme: the triumphant return of victorious warriors, leading prisoners and booty behind them.¹⁰¹

As for Carthage, one should note Justin's assertion that the widely successful general Hasdrubal, around 500 B.C., had celebrated "four triumphs" at the time of his death (19.1.7). Justin is speaking in Roman terms—but this shows that at the least, Justin found in his sources a Punic ceremony that was analogous to the Roman one. We know that after the Carthaginian victory in the Mercenary War of 241–238, the Punic army entered Carthage in a spectacular triumphal procession—which included the actual torturing to death in public, by Carthaginian citizen soldiers, of the leader of the enemy army (Polyb. 1.88.6).¹⁰²

And even if the Greeks (or the Carthaginians) did not celebrate victories via magnificent victory processions as frequently as the Romans did, the Greek landscape itself was dotted with stark semipermanent monuments of the victories of one city over another. This was the widespread custom of the *tropaion*, the battlefield trophy marking the

98. Ptolemy II: see Ath. 196A–203B (= Callixenus, *FGrH* 75 F 1); Antiochus IV: Polyb. 30.25.2–19. See Walbank 1967: 359, on royal victory processions.

99. See Errington 1969: 193.

100. On Classical Greek entrance ceremonies: MacCormack 1981: 19 and 281 n. 14. Example of a (failed!) triumphal army entrance at Corinth: Thuc. 1.105.4. Celebratory public banquets: Theopompus *ap.* Ath. 12.532D–E.

101. Dench 1995; cf. above, chap. 5, text at n. 96.

102. There is no doubt of the historicity of this incident: see now Hoyos 2003: 44. There is no Roman parallel for such a savage spectacle.

specific place where an enemy had turned and fled. Cicero thought its frequency remarkable (*De Inv.* 2.23). Like the Roman triumph, the Greek *tropaion* was dedicated to the god who had brought the victory. Indeed, the *tropaion* was not merely a memorial dedication: an oak trunk hung with a set of arms and armor looted from the enemy, “the *tropaion* is an image of Zeus the Lord of Victory.”¹⁰³ Moreover, the dedication ceremony for *tropaia* involved the drawing up of the entire victorious army in battle array, each man crowned with garlands (Xen. *Hell.* 4.3.21). This in itself must have been a grand celebratory moment—different in detail from the Roman triumph but like it in spirit.¹⁰⁴ In addition, because the battlefield trophy was by custom considered a holy site, many of them lasted on display in the countryside for scores or even hundreds of years. And their sheer number is startling: sources (and our sources are far from complete) refer to at least 110 battlefield *tropaia* just for battles down to 300 B.C. We know from Polybius (4.8.5) that bitter fighting in Greece in the third century added many more; and indeed *tropaion* symbolism appears more frequently on the coinage of Greek city-states in the fourth and third centuries than before.¹⁰⁵

In many cases Greek victory memorials of captured enemy armor or other militaristic symbols were also placed prominently on permanent display in central Panhellenic religious sanctuaries, with public inscriptions explaining their victorious significance. These dedications were often spectacular; they were paid for from the *akrothinia*, the tenth of battlefield booty always publicly dedicated to the gods. Though we possess no detailed accounts of the ceremonies at which these victory displays were dedicated at the Panhellenic sanctuaries, such ceremonies must surely have been magnificent, and in a sense represented “the culmination of the campaign.”¹⁰⁶

Ancient writers are clear regarding the psychological impact that the *tropaia* and the splendid victory displays in the Panhellenic temples were intended to produce: permanent glory for the victors and inspiration in their descendants; and shame for the vanquished (which often led to ha-

103. On *tropaia*: Pritchett 1974: 272–73. The quote: Burkett 1985: 267. Pritchett (272) also notes that a major deity in Attalid Pergamum was Zeus Tropaeus, “Zeus the Bringer of the Trophy of Victory.”

104. Pritchett 1974: 274; cf. Connor 1988: 15.

105. The vast number of *tropaia* on the Greek landscape: Pritchett 1974: 263–72 (with sources).

106. The *akrothinia*: Pritchett 1971: 93–100. The quote: Connor 1988: 26.

tred). An example is the inscription with which Pyrrhus of Epirus consecrated Macedonian shields in the sanctuary at Dodona in 274:

These shields once ravaged Asia dripping with gold;
 These shields once fixed the yoke of slavery upon the Greeks.
 Now, abandoned, they are fixed to the columns of Zeus's temple,
 Seized from arrogant Macedon.

The inscribed insult was still on display four hundred years later (Paus. 1.13.3).¹⁰⁷

Other examples underline the point. From the Classical period, consider the group of more than thirty large bronze statues dedicated by the Spartans at the great Panhellenic shrine of Delphi after their victory in the Peloponnesian War: statues of the gods who had helped them defeat Athens, and of victorious Spartan generals, standing right at the entrance to the Sacred Way, and still there for Pausanias to see six hundred years later (Paus. 10.9.7–8, cf. Plut. *Lys.* 18). Parts of the explanatory victory inscriptions, meant to be seen by all visitors to the great sanctuary, are still extant.¹⁰⁸ Or consider the Tegeans' triumphant display on the temple of Athena Alea of the chains the Spartans allegedly carried into Arcadia to enslave them circa 560: the Tegeans had forced Spartan prisoners of war to wear those chains instead (Hdt. 1.66). A Hellenistic parallel is the triumphant display at Medeum in Acarnania of the shields that the Aetolians had inscribed in 231 to celebrate their imminent victory over the town (before they were defeated); the shields were still proudly exhibited in Polybius's time (2.2.9–11 and 2.4.1–2). The inscribed marble stele and golden shield erected at Olympia by the Spartans to celebrate their victory over the Athenians at Tanagra in 457 was still visible six hundred years later: it stood near the statue of Nike (Victory) in the east portico of the great temple of Zeus Olympius (Paus. 5.10.4). The inscribed stone block on the Acropolis celebrating the Athenian victory over the Boeotians and Chalcidians in 506 is still extant today.¹⁰⁹

One common means of permanent celebration of victory was the public display of enemy suits of arms and armor captured on the battlefield. We have already noted Pyrrhus's display of Macedonian shields—but Pyrrhus's own shield was on triumphant display in the shrine of Deme-

107. On the psychological impact, see Demosth. 15.35 (glory and inspiration) and Paus. 9.4.8 (shame—leading to hatred), with Pritchett 1974: 262 and 274. Pyrrhus's inscription: Marchetti 1992: 58.

108. Meiggs and Lewis 1969: no. 95.

109. Tod 1948: no. 15, cf. Hdt. 5.75–77.

ter at Argos for centuries, taken from his corpse by the Argives after he was killed trying to seize the city in 272 (Paus. 2.21.4).¹¹⁰ But there are even more spectacular examples. In the Classical period the Athenian general Demosthenes, celebrating his victories in 426 B.C., dedicated in the temples at Athens three hundred suits of arms and armor taken from the enemy dead (Thuc. 3.114.1). The famous Painted Stoa at Athens not only celebrated in a series of magnificent paintings the entire history of Athenian military victories, but displayed hundreds of suits of hoplite arms and armor taken from the defeated Spartans at Pylos in 425; they were still in place six hundred years later (Paus. 1.15). But Demosthenes' dedications and the Painted Stoa were far outdone at the sanctuary at Thermum in Aetolia in the Hellenistic age, where an astounding fifteen thousand suits of enemy arms and armor dedicated to the gods in celebration of Aetolian victories were on display (Polyb. 5.8.9).¹¹¹

Yet even the magnificent Aetolian victory monument at Thermum faced strong Hellenistic competition. There were the great victory monuments set up by Attalus I at Pergamum.¹¹² There was also Antigonos II's Battleship Monument on Delos, a permanent celebration, dedicated to Apollo, of Antigonos's naval victory over Ptolemy III at Cos in the 240s: a splendid building over seventy meters long preserving Antigonos's actual flagship in the battle; or the famous Winged Victory of Samothrace, the magnificent statue of the goddess Nike descending to the prow of a warship, dedicated (probably) by the Rhodians in the sanctuary of the Cabeiri on Samothrace in celebration of their naval victory at Myonessus over Antiochus III in 190.¹¹³

The Hellenistic age was in fact rife with examples of cities setting up permanent monuments and establishing games commemorating victories by kings and generals: at Priene, a bronze statue and an altar and an annual sacrifice and procession in honor of King Lysimachus for his victories (ca. 286/285 B.C.); at Ilium, a spectacular golden statue of King Antiochus I on horseback, set up conspicuously in the sanctuary of Athena, celebrating Antiochus's victories (ca. 279/274); at Megalopolis,

110. See Marchetti 1992: 59.

111. On Thermum: Pritchett 1974: 252.

112. See above, chap. 4, text at n. 60.

113. Political background to the Victory of Samothrace: see conveniently Charbonneau et al. 1973: 287–88. On the Battleship Monument on Delos, vowed to Apollo before Antigonos's victory at Cos (Ath. 209E), see conveniently Ginouves and Hatzopoulos 1994: 200–201.

four bronze statues and an altar of marble and an annual procession and sacrifice in honor of Philopoemen and his victories (ca. 183/182); even at the small town of Istria on the Black Sea, a large marble stele proclaiming the many victories of Agathocles son of Antiphilus over the Thracians, and prescribing numerous public honors to him (late third or early second century). Meanwhile, at the medium-sized city of Xanthus in southern Asia Minor, the entire left-hand side of the monumental gateway to the city was devoted to a detailed record of the military victories both on land and sea gained for Xanthus by its leading citizen general (name lost: mid-second century).¹¹⁴

One should stress that with all this we are dealing not with the passing excitement of a victory parade, but with the creation of permanent sites of memory. A. W. Gomme thought the vast numbers of victory dedications in cities and the *tropaia* in the Greek countryside absurd.¹¹⁵ But Finley makes the correct point about the meaning of victory dedications for ancient Mediterranean people. The battle itself and its material consequences were obviously extremely important, but were never enough in themselves: "Victory without honour was unacceptable; there could be no honour without public proclamation; and there could be no publicity without the evidence of a trophy."¹¹⁶

Rome, too, followed the Hellenistic pattern of permanent victory monuments. Monuments to victories and the statues of victorious generals adorned the Roman Forum and were massed on the Capitoline Hill; six triumphal arches marked the traditional route that Roman triumphal parades followed from the gates of the city to the Capitol. Some of the most impressive of the victory monuments dated from the third century or earlier.¹¹⁷ But the majority of these victory monuments were erected in the second century or later, after our period; thus in 190 there were only two triumphal arches, and one was very recent, built by P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus, victor over Hannibal.¹¹⁸ In our period too the speaker's platform in the Forum was adorned both with spoils taken from defeated

114. Priene: OGIS 11; Ilium: OGIS 219; Megalopolis: *Syll.*³: 624; Istria: Burstein 1985: no. 68. Xanthus: *Ma* 2002: 251–52.

115. Gomme 1956: 530.

116. Finley 1956: 132; in agreement: Pritchett 1974: 249 and 273.

117. The enormous bronze statue of Jupiter on the Capitol made from the armor of defeated Samnites sometime between 293 and 272; the statue on the Capitol of L. Caecilius Metellus, victor over the Carthaginians at Panormus in 250; the statue of Q. Fabius Maximus Cunctator and the huge bronze statue of Heracles he seized at Tarentum in 209; see Sehlmyer 1999: 113–16, 120–21.

118. See Maria 1988: 31–53.

Latins in the war of 340–338, including the prows of ships (*rostra*) seized from Antium, as well as with the equestrian statues of the consuls L. Maenius and L. Furius Camillus, victors in that war;¹¹⁹ yet the platform also held monuments of a different sort, commemorating Roman ambassadors who had been murdered on diplomatic missions.¹²⁰

“We understand through comparison,” wrote Polybius at the beginning of his *Histories*.¹²¹ When the Roman customs are looked at in isolation from their contemporaries, they may appear shockingly militaristic to moderns—who draw all kinds of large implications from that fact. But Roman customs, in their obsessive public celebrations of victory, appear little different from the obsessive public celebrations of victory we find in many Classical and Hellenistic states, large and small. It is only through such comparisons of the attitudes and actions of contemporaries that one can arrive at a true understanding of the behavior of states and the course of events within a large international system.¹²²

The evidence collected above is admittedly only anecdotal (though there is much of it); for a comparison of Roman militarism as against the militarism of other Hellenistic states large, medium, and small it would be far better methodologically if we had solid comparative statistics of (say) yearly warfare. But we do not have such statistics. The Romans appear to have gone to war almost every year in the fourth and third centuries B.C. (about 93% of the time), as the evidence of T. R. S. Broughton shows.¹²³ Solid Hellenistic statistics are far harder to come by. This is especially so for the middle decades of the third century, when there are significant gaps in our knowledge of the interactions even among the great states, and our knowledge of the military activities of medium and small states is very scanty. So here I will only note that on Lévêque’s calculations, there was large-scale war involving one or more of the great Hellenistic dynasties in 158 of the 163 years between 323 and 160 B.C. (i.e., there were only five years

119. See Sehlmyer 1999: 43–45.

120. Sp. Antius, Cloelius Tullus, C. Fulcinus, and L. Roscius, murdered at Fidenae in 438 (see above, chap. 5); Coruncanus, allegedly murdered at the instigation of Queen Teuta of the Ardiaei in 230 (cf. Polyb. 2.8.12–13); see Sehlmyer 1999: 63–66.

121. Polyb. 1.3.3; cf. Lundestad 1990: 27 on the foreign relations of powerful modern states.

122. Advocates of Roman exceptional militarism might also want to point to the custom of *devotio*, whereby a Roman commander sacrifices himself by riding into the enemy. But the custom was rare (see Broughton 1951: 135 and 177); its purpose was to assure the safety of the community from external threat (see Livy 8.9.4 and 10.28.13); and the idea was not confined to the Romans: the Greeks were perfectly familiar with it (see Plut. *Pelop.* 21.2).

123. Broughton 1951: 84–326 (esp. the activities of consuls and praetors).

of general peace in 163 years, a 97% rate of war years), that in the late third century we know that Attalus I, Philip V, and Antiochus III all went to war every year during the first twenty-five years of their reigns—or that when we do have detailed information on the actions of medium-sized Greek states, for instance in the Peloponnese between 251 and 236, we find warfare every year, with multiple actors involved. Such statistics must be used with great care, but they do seem to provide the highly militarized context for the anecdotal evidence collected above.¹²⁴

This is not to minimize at all Roman militarism and assertiveness. Harris has brilliantly delineated these aspects of Roman culture and society, and they are crucial. But the dangers inherent in applying unit-attribute theory to the rise of Rome in the Mediterranean should now be obvious. The Romans were militaristic, assertive, often brutal, and fervently celebrated victory—but they were one unit among many in an anarchic structure, and what was true of them appears to have been true of every major state in the Hellenistic Mediterranean, almost all secondary states, and even many small states. Central aspects of Roman culture and conduct are not attractive to moderns. But they were natural responses to the pressures about security that came from the anarchic interstate environment, and Rome responded to those pressures in ways similar to most other ancient states.

In sum, the militarized society of Rome as it had developed by the third century—the warrior ethos of its senatorial aristocracy, the willingness of its populace to serve in the army and to take heavy losses, the general acceptance of the likelihood of warfare in most years—appears to be a rather typical example of the trend toward functional similarity of states under the heavy pressures of a militarized international anarchy. In this respect, at least, the example of Rome tends to support the hypothesis that “the units that survive [in an anarchy] come to look like one another.”¹²⁵

ROMAN INTERNAL DISCOURSE

It is significant, however, that at Rome war in official ideology was the restoration of order against those who had disrupted that order. The primary Roman diplomatic action before war was the *rerum repetitio*: the

124. The great Greek powers: Lévêque 1968: 279 and n. 108. Obviously, this involves three great states, not one (as with Rome), but the figure is still useful in terms of understanding the general level of Mediterranean violence. The Peloponnese: see above, chap. 4, text at n. 52.

125. Waltz 1979: 77.

recitation of Roman grievances to an offending party, offering them a chance to redress those grievances in a peaceful manner. The *rerum repetitio* was rooted in Rome's earliest experience in Latium, and was, of course, a classic example of what political scientists term "compellence diplomacy."¹²⁶ The point of the *rerum repetitio*—or rather, the point with its usual rejection by the other side—as well as the rituals of the fetial priests up to the point the war started, was to establish in the eyes of the gods and the world that the disruptors of order were not the Romans, and that the war now undertaken by Rome was therefore a just war, which the gods would support. A. N. Sherwin-White argues that the effect of such rituals was that "Roman senators were conditioned from their earliest history to the notion of justifying a war in terms of the *other* party's wrong-doing."¹²⁷

Many polities in the Hellenistic Mediterranean employed accusations against others in their interstate relations: Rome was not different. One can see such moralizing interstate discourse in the debates between the envoys of the Ptolemies and Seleucids in 218 over who had the moral and legal right to rule Coele Syria, which led to the Fourth Syrian War, or in the Carthaginian arguments that same year regarding the rights and wrongs of the destruction of Saguntum in Spain, which led to the Second Punic War.¹²⁸ But Hellenistic Greek states were sometimes harsher in their own internal discourse. The stance of the great Macedonian monarchs was that the glory of gaining "spear-won land" was enough in itself to justify war;¹²⁹ the governing elite of the Achaean League viewed the conquest of the entire Peloponnese as a matter of manifest destiny (Polyb. 2.37.7–11);¹³⁰ the Celtic tribes in the Po Valley simply sent out their young men to follow the warrior road (2.21.1–2). We have almost no evidence of the decision-making elite or the populace of any of these communities ever protesting a war as being too aggressive.¹³¹

Were Roman senators naive in consistently blaming others' wrongdoing for the starting of wars, or—worse—were they conscious hypo-

126. Discussion: above, chap. 5, text at n. 10.

127. Sherwin-White 1980: 78.

128. The dispute over Coele Syria in 218: above, chap. 4, text at n. 83. The Punic arguments over the rights and wrongs of war in 218: see Polyb. 3.20.6–21.8 and 30.3, and above, chap. 5, text at n. 226.

129. See Lévêque 1968; Austin 1986; Billows 1995: 20–21 (above, chap. 4, text at n. 26).

130. On the fierce microimperialisms of the smaller Greek states, see esp. Ma 2000.

131. Aratus of Sicyon once dissuaded Philip V from launching a surprise attack on the king's own ally Messene, on grounds that it would be politically counterproductive—but Philip's restraint did not last (Polyb. 7.12, cf. Plut. *Arat.* 50).

crites? Both assertions have been strongly made.¹³² The Romans were certainly naive, in that crises among ancient states were often complicated in origin, in distinction to the Romans' simplistic official attitude of always blaming others. Roman actions themselves regularly contributed to outbreaks of war: their demands on others during a crisis, made on pain of war, were often harsh and unalterable, and did not consider anyone else's point of view. Scholars have emphasized this typical Roman stance of coercion.¹³³ But in engaging in coercive diplomacy the Romans, as we have shown, were not different from other ancient great powers: they contributed to the problem, but they were not its source. Moreover, international-relations theorists argue that states in an anarchy habitually overlook the threatening nature of their own actions, engage in threatening statements, and impute malign intentions to others simply because others' actions place obstacles in the path of their own preferences.¹³⁴ The Romans did this, and they can be faulted for doing this. But many other ancient states did this—partly from the impact of the anarchy—that is, the need to appear fierce and determined—and partly also it was the instinctive stance of aristocratic (and slaveowning) honor cultures. Such Roman conduct cannot be taken as strong evidence of a specially aggressive *Sonderweg*.¹³⁵

Of course, coercive demands made by Rome during a crisis might well appear to the other side as hypocritical pretexts for Roman aggression, or as arrogant public claims to superior state status.¹³⁶ But—again—fierce concern for status does not differentiate Rome from any other ancient state. Concern for status was based partly in widespread Mediterranean internal cultures of honor, but also (again) there were pressures from the structure of anarchy: where the rule of law exists, it is possible to accept

132. See Harris 1979: 166–75 (a combination); or Mandell 1991: 37–38 (conscious hypocrisy).

133. See esp. Derow 1979: 1–15, who notes that Polybius's Greek terminology consistently depicts the Romans as giving orders to other states.

134. See esp. Glaser 1992: 515–16.

135. Veyne 1975 argues that Rome was exceptional in the harshness of its diplomacy: “elle ne négocie pas, mais fait ses conditions et refuse la table ronde” (819). But the same could be said of every large Greek state in the Classical period and in the Hellenistic age: see above, chap. 3, text at n. 108, and chap. 4, text at n. 77. Inability to see how one's own actions contribute to a problem, or to be contrite, as typical of all honor cultures: see Wyatt-Brown 1982: 28–29.

136. See, e.g., Sall. *Hist.* 4.69: the bitter “Letter of King Mithridates VI” (first century B.C.). Metrodorus of Scepsis, Mithridates' court historian, accused the Romans of always initiating war from motives of greed: Plin. *NH* 34.34. The importance of issues of international status to the Romans: see esp. Linderski 1995: 453–78; Kallet-Marx 1995: 87–88 and 93–99.

a perceived insult without resorting to violence, but where there is little or no law, to accept an insult is a sign of weakness, and presages further depredations from others.¹³⁷

Moreover, if the purpose of *rerum repetitio* and fetial ritual was to gain the support of the gods because Rome was waging a “just war” (*bellum iustum*) whereas the other side was not, in our period divine protection was certainly important to have. We as historians know the Romans will win, and this unconsciously frames our understanding of events—and even of their causes. But one must stress that the Senate at the time could never be certain as to outcomes. First, ancient polities—and this includes their military strengths—were even more opaque to one another than are modern ones.¹³⁸ In any case the *Patres* knew that Rome rarely won wars easily: Rome suffered ninety major defeats on the battlefield during the Republic, and some defeats were catastrophic in scale.¹³⁹ In battle the death rate of military tribunes—the young senatorial aristocrats of the next generation—tended to be high even in victory.¹⁴⁰ Roman tradition also held that during the Republic more than forty Roman commanding generals were themselves killed in battle; twenty-one Roman commanding generals were killed in battle in our period alone.¹⁴¹ These facts suggest the harsh character of the world Rome faced and the formidable nature of Rome’s enemies. Perhaps this experience explains the Roman lack of joy and pleasure in war (although Romans certainly accepted its necessity)—very different from the spirit of Alexander the Great, or of ferocious contemporary monarchs such as Philip V of Macedon and Antiochus the Great. No wonder many people felt, in war, the need for the support of the gods.¹⁴²

The only religious guarantee of a *bellum iustum*, moreover, was a war that was defensive in origin. Cicero, in a dialogue set in the mid-second

137. See above, chap. 3, text at n. 111, on the ferocious contest for status among Greek polities.

138. The principle of the opacity of states (including regarding their own power in war)—i.e., the uncertainty principle—see above, chap. 2, text at n. 22. Ancient governments’ severe lack of secure intelligence about the military capabilities and intentions of others: above, chap. 3, text at n. 95.

139. List of severe Roman defeats: see Rosenstein 1990: 179–203. By contrast, the distorted image of an invincible Roman army, always victorious on the individual battlefield, still occurs among prominent political scientists: see, e.g., Rosen 2003: 216.

140. Harris (1979: 40 and n. 1) suggests a death rate here of 20–25% (two or three of every twelve young officers in every legion). But this may be too high: see now Rosenstein 2004: 86.

141. See the appendix to this chapter, below.

142. Lack of Roman joy in war, as compared to, e.g., Alexander: Veyne 1975: 804. Philip V’s pleasure in war: Livy 27.32–33, in the Peloponnese in 208; Livy 31.24, at Athens

century B.C., says that a *bellum iustum* can only arise as a response to the actions of another state: a response to an attack either upon Rome, or upon allies of Rome (*De Rep.* 3.34–35).¹⁴³ This was the basic doctrine: the example of *rerum repetitio* followed by fetial declaration of war found in Livy (1.32.5–14) is premised on it being a response to the injurious acts of others.¹⁴⁴

Harris argues that the Roman religious rituals surrounding war were merely technical mechanisms for ritually preserving the *pax deorum* (Rome's peace with the gods). It is true that these rituals sought to preserve the *pax deorum* through the conduct of formalities. But Polybius says that religious feeling at Rome was at its height during crises (3.112.9), and that even in his period (ca. 150 B.C.) most senators were pious believers (6.56.12–15, a passage too often ignored). His continuator Posidonius also underlined the intensity of Roman religious devotion (Ath. 6.274A). The Romans themselves asserted that they were different from other peoples not so much on the basis of physical courage—though their physical courage was important—as because of deep religiosity and fear of the gods.¹⁴⁵

All this raises serious questions for the thesis of Roman manipulation of religious formalities in the service of continuous aggression. The Roman gods were thought to be concerned that Roman wars be justified because of others' aggression and wrongdoing; but how could the gods of the city be concerned with a justification to which their protégés were indifferent or thought ridiculous?¹⁴⁶ The danger of trying to deceive the gods on an issue of war would be clear to any Roman: allegedly the *pax deorum* had been gravely undermined by untoward state action by Rome when the Celts defeated the Roman army and burnt the city to the ground about 390.¹⁴⁷ As late as 55 B.C. the tribune C. Ateius Capito could ac-

in 200 (both passages based on Polybian material: Walbank 1940: 91–92 and 139); Antiochus III's pleasure in war: Polyb. 10.49, in Afghanistan in 208 (cf. Eckstein 1995: 35–36). The seriousness and earnestness of the Senate when war is being deliberated: see, e.g., Dion. Hal. 19.6 (280 B.C.); this was clearly the Roman self-concept. On Roman anxiety, see also text below at n. 171.

143. *Nullum bellum suscipi a civitate optima nisi aut pro fide aut pro salute. . . Illa iniusta bella sunt, quae sine causa suscepta.*

144. On the Roman concept of the just war, see Albert 1980: esp. 12–36.

145. See Lind 1972: esp. 250–52 (with sources). The attitude finds sincere expression in Livy's history of Rome: see Merten 1965.

146. Sherwin-White 1980: 77. Note Seneca's instinctive advice, in the context of internal feuding at Rome, always to find out whether the person who has inflicted *inuria* on you actually intended the insult, or whether it was an accident, or he was forced, or deceived (*De Ira* 3.12.2): the parallel with external *rerum repetitio* is obvious.

cuse the consul M. Licinius Crassus of starting an unjust aggressive war with the Parthians “against men who had done the city no wrong” (Plut. *Crass.* 16.3)—warning of the curse of the gods. Also from 55 is Cato the Younger’s warning to the Senate on religious grounds because of Caesar’s alleged unprovoked aggression against the Germanic Suebi. Complex factional politics were no doubt involved in both incidents. But for us the point is that Ateius and Cato were taken seriously: Ateius found wide support among the populace, and later misfortunes to Caesar’s army in Gaul may have been portrayed as a fulfillment of Cato’s prophecy.¹⁴⁸

Clever manipulation did of course occur. As among the Greeks, complexities of situation and complexities of procedure allowed flexibility of interpretation to the advantage of perceived state interest, and Romans sometimes appear guilty of this. A classic example is the role of the *fetiales* in the abrogation of the unfavorable Roman treaty with the Samnites in 321 B.C.¹⁴⁹ And since, as Realists say, the very existence of multiple states allowed for innumerable frictions and irritations, a just cause for a war was always fairly easy to find if one wanted to find it.¹⁵⁰ Hence Polybius says that Rome went to war with the Dalmatae in 157 B.C. on the official grounds of attacks on polities friendly to Rome, and mistreatment of Roman envoys (both of which, it is important to note, had indeed occurred), but primarily to reassert authority in the upper Adriatic where Rome’s long absence had undermined it, and even to exercise the army (32.13).¹⁵¹

If the Romans of the Middle Republic were merely ruthless expansionists, however, it would have been much simpler for their conduct of affairs if their gods had not mandated the defensive nature of *bellum iustum*—as, for instance, the Carthaginians’ gods (as far as we can tell) did not.¹⁵² True, by the late third century fetial priests were no longer going to the

147. Cf. Kostial 1995: 64 (though cf. 109). On the Roman belief in maintaining the *pax deorum* in order to achieve success in warring, see Rosenstein 1990: 68–69, 92–94, 110–12, and 173–74.

148. On the Ateius incident: Ward 1977: 285–87 (with sources). On Cato’s accusations, with the point about later disasters to Caesar’s army: Powell 1998: 123–24 (with sources).

149. See Weidemann 1987: 489–90. Greek sophistry toward treaty texts: above, chap. 3, text at n. 15.

150. Cf. above, chap. 2, text at n.32.

151. A similar case at Livy 10.1.4 (310 B.C.), though again real plundering raids by the enemy were involved. The motive of “exercising the army” in 157 is hard to accept, since in the early 150s there was significant fighting elsewhere: see Walbank 1979: 535–36. The Dalmatae were in fact difficult to defeat: App. *Illyr.* 11; Strabo 7.5.5.

152. See Lancel 1997: 193, and (e.g.) Livy 21.21.9, with Huss 1985: 235, and Hoyos 2003: 107. See, too, the story of Hannibal’s dream, and the grand conquest vouchsafed him by the Carthaginian gods: Cic. *Div.* 1.49, citing Hannibal’s friend the historian Silenus; cf. Livy 21.22.5–9; Dio in Zon. 8.22; Val. Max. 1.7.1; Sil. Ital. *Pun.* 3.163–216.

frontiers of potential enemies to make their demands for restitution and throwing spears into their territory upon refusal; priests had been replaced by secular envoys. But the priests' religious advice was still being given to the Senate, and the task of the envoys was still always to make accusations of misconduct against others. Procedure had altered, but the basic public stance had not changed.¹⁵³

Or had a religious transformation in fact occurred? Some scholars point to the growth of the cult of the goddess Victoria (Victory) at Rome as an indication that it had. Thus in 296 B.C. a temple to Bellona Victrix was dedicated in the Campus Martius, and a statue to Victoria was erected in the forum; in 295 a temple to Jupiter Victor was vowed; in 294 a temple to Victoria was dedicated; in 193 Cato the Elder dedicated a small temple to Victoria Virgo; Roman coinage from the mid-third century often displays Victoria on the reverse. When one links the building of temples to Victory at Rome with the Victoriates coinage, and the temples and the coinage to the prayer to the gods by the Roman censors every five years that "the things of the Romans should be bigger and better," the picture, prominent scholars conclude, is clear.¹⁵⁴

But the picture is not clear. We have already dealt with the censorial prayer—a mild ceremony compared to other rituals expressing hope for expansion in use in other Classical and Hellenistic polities.¹⁵⁵ As for the goddess Victoria at Rome in the 290s, no one doubts that the Romans idolized victory, but we only need to remember the contemporary "veritable théologie de la victoire" among the Hellenistic states to see that Rome was not exceptional here.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, Rome does not come close to the effusion of victory symbolism that adorned Classical Athens, with its Painted Stoa on one side of the Agora city-center, commemorating a whole series of Athenian victories both in huge paintings and in masses of displayed booty, the Temple of Zeus the Liberator, also in the Agora, with its roof crowned by a series of winged Victories paid for (as everyone knew) directly from loot taken in war, the great bronze statue of Victory (*Nikē*), which was in the Agora as well, and the Temple to Athena Nike up on the Acropolis overlooking the whole scene; even the state treas-

153. The shift in diplomatic procedure: Walbank 1949: 15–19. It is extreme to argue from the shift in procedure that the *fetiales* had never actually been involved in declaring war: so Weidemann 1987: 478–90.

154. Harris 1979: 118–20 (the censorial prayer), 123–24 (on Victoria, with sources)—accepted by Oakley 1993: 29–30; Raaflaub 1996: 298–99.

155. See text above at n. 40.

156. Intensity of victory symbolism among the Hellenistic states: above, chap. 4, text at n. 15, cf. text at n. 60; and text above at n. 110 (this chapter).

ury reserve, kept in the Parthenon on the Acropolis, was cast in golden *Nikai*.¹⁵⁷ The coinage of the city-state of Tarentum, Rome's rival in southern Italy after about 310, was—like the coinage of Rome—dominated by victory symbolism; and a famous statue of Nike (Victory) occupied a central place in the city, just as the statue of Victoria did at Rome. Indeed, the presence of Nike on tomb paintings in central and southern Italy is widespread in the late fourth and early third centuries, perhaps adopted from the pervasive Macedonian victory symbolism in the East.¹⁵⁸ But intense desire for victory was natural for all polities in the war-prone state-systems of the Classical and Hellenistic Mediterranean; one need only consider the alternative and its consequences. Thus after the terrible Roman defeat at Cannae, King Hiero II of Syracuse gave Rome a magnificent Syracusan statue of Nike “for the omen’s sake” (Livy 22.37.5). In their devotion to the goddess Victoria the Romans were thus not exceptional; they were merely—understandably—typical.

Moreover, the full list of temples built at Rome in 310–290 shows that the temples to Victoria were only one element in the intense Roman religiosity of the period: we also find dedications of temples to Salus (Safety), Jupiter Stator (the Stayer of Flight), Fors Fortuna (Fate), Venus Obsequens (the Propitious), and to Asclepius the Healer, imported from Greece. These latter dedications are clearly not monuments to self-confident aggression.¹⁵⁹ Indeed, it is important that Salus (Safety) was as central in Roman thought as Victoria—and clearly they are linked. Not only do we have the temple of Salus, but the most typical Roman oath pledged one’s destruction if the oath were violated, “only let the city remain unharmed [*salva urbe*].” Fears of destruction of the city and its people were also warded off by invocations of the Capitol, or the Vestal Virgins, or the Palladium, a magic statue of Athena allegedly rescued from destroyed Troy, kept in the temple of Vesta, and rescued from fire in 241 by the *pontifex maximus*.¹⁶⁰ The main concern of Roman state religion, as Jerzy Lindersky says, was *salus publica*, the security of the Roman state.¹⁶¹

Here it is significant that prayers for safety—*salus*, *incolumitas*—were

157. Stunning discussion in Raaflaub 2001: 325–28.

158. Nike on Tarentine coinage: Willeumier 1939: 377; Brauer 1986: 88 and 149. The great statue of Nike: Willeumier 1939: 284. Cf. above, chap. 5, text at n. 145. The widespread appearance of Nike in central and southern Italian tomb painting: Dench 1995: 65 and 74.

159. See Wallace 1990: 286.

160. Plentiful evidence for the deep Roman concern for the safety of the state (*salus*): Koch 1960: 160–65. Rome, of course, had been burnt to the ground by the Celts ca. 390 B.C.

161. Lindersky 1993: 55–56, cf. 58. See, e.g., Livy 27.23.4: *incolumitas*.

apparently central to the ceremonies surrounding the leave-taking of a consul and his army from Rome, and gratitude for safety an important element in the thanksgiving ceremonies for victories. We have no direct testimony for the prayer that the consuls made on the Capitol before leaving the city, but much indirect evidence indicates that (if there was war) the consuls prayed not only for *victoria* but for the safe return of their army, their men. This emphasis on safety appears in the prayer that P. Cornelius Scipio (later Africanus) gives in Livy as his army prepares to leave Sicily to invade Africa in 204 (29.27.2–4). It is true that Scipio in 204 was not a consul (he was proconsul), nor was he in Rome. But the implications of Scipio's leave-taking prayer in Livy are confirmed by the parodies of commanders' prayers that appear several times in Scipio's contemporary, the comic playwright Plautus—in which safe return appears as a prominent goal.¹⁶² Similarly, we are told that the letter from the consuls to the Senate following their great victory over Hannibal's brother Hasdrubal at the Metaurus in 207 stressed not only the destruction of Hasdrubal but that the legions and commanders were safe and unharmed, and that the subsequent public prayer of thanksgiving stressed this too; this strengthens the evidence offered by the inscription of the prayer of the Arval Brethren for the emperor Trajan as he leaves for the Dacian campaign (admittedly much later than our period), which has a similar stress not only on victory but on safe return.¹⁶³ It is therefore not surprising that the Senate denied triumphs to commanders who had won victories that cost too much Roman blood.¹⁶⁴ The order of public concern in all of this state religion appears to be first, victory per se—that is, the increase of Rome's power and control over its environment—and then the safety of the army and its soldiers; the gaining (e.g.) of loot is there, but third and behind. This indicates the prevalence not of triumphalism but of anxiety in mid-Republican religious ceremonial; and given the numerous serious Roman defeats on the battlefield in this period (see above, text at n. 141) such anxiety is understandable.

162. See Plaut. *Pers.* 753–54 (twice); *Stich.* 402–5; *Rud.* 906–11; *Amph.* 197; cf. *Amph.* 650 (Alcmena's speech upon the return of her husband), with the comments now of Hickson-Hahn 2004: 37–39.

163. Livy 27.51.4: *legiones Romanas incolumes, salvos consules esse*; cf. 51.8 (thanksgiving *incolumi exercitu*). The Arval Brethren—famous for the antiquarianism of their ritual—pray and beg Jupiter Optimus Maximus for divine aid both for victory and for the safe return of the emperor: *CIL* 6.2074; see Hickson-Hahn 2004: 35–36.

164. Livy 35.6.8–7.1 and 8 (L. Cornelius Merula, 193 B.C.); Oros. 5.4.7 (Appius Claudius Pulcher, 143 B.C.).

Indeed, what the series of temples built at Rome in 310–290 appears to demonstrate when taken as a whole is not triumphalism but “an effort to gain the assistance of the gods in a dangerous military crisis.”¹⁶⁵ The temple to Salus (302), for instance, was vowed and dedicated by a consul involved in desperate fighting with the Samnites.¹⁶⁶ The temple to Jupiter the Stayer of Flight was vowed by a consul of 294 as his army was dissolving in rout (again against Samnites); his army steadied itself, but—we are told—took huge casualties (Livy 10.36.4–15 and 37.14–15).¹⁶⁷ The nature of the military crisis is, in fact, clear: in these years Rome faced an extraordinary Samnite-Etruscan-Umbrian-Celtic coalition, which culminated in the great battle of Sentinum, north of Rome, in 295. It was in the aftermath of the Roman victory at Sentinum but while the war was still raging that the temple to Fors Fortuna was dedicated in 294 just outside the city, and the temple to Jupiter the Stayer of Flight was dedicated in the center of the city.¹⁶⁸ As for the importation of Asclepius the Healer, one may point to the parallel Roman importation of the goddess Magna Mater (the Great Mother) from Asia Minor during the crisis of the Hannibalic War.¹⁶⁹

The consular *Fasti* provide additional important evidence for the dark mood of Rome in this period. A law passed in 342 (the *lex Genucia*) forbade anyone to hold the same high office twice within ten years; the aim was to prevent domination of the consulship by a few prominent men. The *Fasti* show that the law was obeyed until the bitter fighting of the Second Samnite War (327–304). It was breached then, and for the next thirty years, with repeated election of the same men to the consulship: L. Papirius Cursor was consul in 326, dictator in 325, dictator in 324, and in the aftermath of the Roman disaster at the Caudine Forks (321) consul in 320 with Q. Publilius Philo—himself consul three times between 327 and 315—and then immediately consul again in 319. And if Publilius Philo was consul three times between 327 and 315, Cursor was in fact consul five times between 326 and 313, including two years in a row (in 320 and 319, after Caudine Forks); and twice he was also dictator two

165. Wallace 1990: 286.

166. See Cornell 1995: 465 n. 30.

167. Discussion: Harris 1971: 75–76.

168. On the crisis in Italy that led to Sentinum, see above, chap. 5, text at nn. 40 and 123.

169. See Wallace 1990: 286. On the Magna Mater, see Burton 1996, and below, chap. 7. On the goddess Victoria at Rome in the 290s, see also the warning of Weinstock 1957: 247.

years in a row (in 325 and 324, then in 310 and 309). Similarly, the crisis of Sentinum in 295 finds as consuls two men who had held the consulship seven times between them (Q. Fabius Maximus Rullianus and P. Decius Mus). There is nothing like this again until the crisis of the Hannibalic War (with the consuls of 218–208), and then the crisis of the invasion of the Cimbri and Teutones (104–100, with C. Marius elected consul five times in a row). The parallels are instructive, and indicate that the period of the 320s to the 290s was an age of military crisis and desperation (as in 218–208 and again in 104–100)—not an age of self-confident triumph. The consequence was the disregard of constitutional niceties in favor of the repeated election of men of proven military ability.¹⁷⁰

There is, then, no reason to conclude that Roman religiosity suddenly adopted a triumphant and predatory stance toward the outside world starting in the late fourth century, a transformation in the direction of gods who overtly sanctioned universal aggression. Victory was indeed idolized—how could it not be, in such an environment? But as the Roman poet Ennius writes of his people around 200 B.C., “the Roman, even when things go well, is filled with fear in his heart.”¹⁷¹

If a transformation in religious tone did not occur in this period, this means that Romans continued to take traditional religion and its constraints on state behavior quite seriously. Indeed, sometimes this piety even mandated conduct that appears to moderns as contrary to Rome’s pragmatic advantage. Even in the crucial year 200 B.C., for instance, when a world-historical war in the Greek East was under way, Rome wasted an entire summer’s campaigning season against Philip V at least in part because the consul who had received command of the war was delayed in Rome to fulfill religious obligations.¹⁷² Similarly, Scipio Africanus, Rome’s best general, had to spend a month in the spring of 190 fulfilling his ritual duties as a Salic priest rather than engage in the crucial pursuit of Antiochus III from Greece across into Asia Minor—and the entire Roman army waited with him. For the Romans, gaining the approval of the gods was in itself pragmatic advantage.¹⁷³

To understand Rome’s internal discourse, it is important too that the

170. On iterated consulships in this period: Cornell 1995: 371–72.

171. *Romanus homo, tamenetsi res bene gesta est, corde suo trepidat*: Enn. *Ann.* 560.

172. P. Sulpicius Galba’s long delay at Rome in 200, in part, clearly, to investigate a serious case of sacrilege (in part, perhaps, because of difficulties in army recruitment as well): see below, chap. 7.

173. Scipio’s religious duties in 190: Polyb. 21.13.10–14 and Livy 37.33.6–7; priests of the *Salii* could not make journeys during the period of the annual shield-dancing ritual. See Briscoe 1981: 337–38.

protests of C. Ateius against Crassus's war and of Cato the Younger against Caesar's war on the Suebi (see above) do not stand alone. Charges of warmongering, or of pursuing war for personal interest rather than for the interests of the state, were a tradition in Roman internal discourse and politics. In our period, many men in the Senate opposed C. Flaminius's land distribution on the Gallic frontier of Italy in 232 B.C. on grounds that it might be provocative to the Celts (Polyb. 2.21.8–9)—an odd criticism if belligerence and provocation were the normal Roman stances toward the Celts in the first place, and/or the Senate did not greatly fear them.¹⁷⁴ Accusations that the Senate had foisted on Rome an unnecessary war against Carthage were publicly spread by tribunes of the plebeians amid the defeats early in the Hannibalic War itself (Livy 22.34.3–4; cf. 22.25.3–4). Serious questions were raised in the Senate in 210 over whether M. Claudius Marcellus's decision to go to war against Rome's rebellious ally Syracuse had been morally justified—with prominent senators speaking against him.¹⁷⁵ In 210 also, the consul M. Valerius Laevinus was openly accused by prominent political opponents of being too bellicose, “capable even in peace of stirring up war” (Livy 26.26.11)—again, an odd charge if Rome and its aristocracy were in this period simply a war machine. In 200, in the context of the power-transition crisis in the eastern Mediterranean discussed above in chapter 4, the advice from the Senate to the assembly for a war against Philip V of Macedon was rejected, amid accusations from a tribune that the *Patres* were piling up unnecessary wars upon a tired populace. It required arguments both from the Senate and from the presiding consul that a war was a necessity of preemptive self-defense to get the *populus* to change its mind, reluctantly, in a second vote.¹⁷⁶ Charges of unjustified war-making were made in the Senate in 187 against the proconsul Cn. Manlius Vulso both for his alleged attempts to break the peace just concluded with Antiochus III of Syria and for his attack on the Gauls of central Asia Minor. These charges were taken seriously—even though Manlius's victories over the Gauls had in fact brought great relief to the Greek cities on the coast.¹⁷⁷ Similar accusations of unjustified warfare were raised against M. Popilius Laenas in 173 over his attack on the Statellate Ligurians—and led not only to the restitution of the Statellates, but to Popil-

174. The tradition critical of Flaminius here probably derives from Q. Fabius Pictor, a contemporary of the events: see Gelzer 1933: 150 (with sources).

175. Discussion: Eckstein 1987: 169–77.

176. See Livy 31.6.4–8.1, discussed in detail below, chap. 7.

177. See Livy 38.45–46, with Rich 1993: 57.

ius's trial (Livy 42.7–10 and 21–22). The deceiving of King Perseus of Macedon in 172/171 led to a moral outcry from the older men in the Senate (Livy 42.47.5–9): the men, that is, of the generation of the Hannibalic War and the crisis of 201–200 in the East.¹⁷⁸ Again, Cato the Elder's speech to the Senate in 167 against war with Rhodes, one of the few actual senatorial speeches from this period that is preserved (Gell. 6.3), argued that the Rhodians had not committed serious enough delicts to warrant war, and that the good of Rome required that moral proprieties and traditional standards of Roman conduct be observed. Cato's arguments to the *Patres*, as A. E. Astin has stressed, were moral in character; he employed them because he thought they would carry weight.¹⁷⁹ Cato later successfully attacked the praetor M. Iuventius Thalna for proposing war against Rhodes when the safety of the state was not at issue.¹⁸⁰

The incidents of Manlius, Popilius, and Iuventius have been used as evidence of ruthless triumph hunting by the Roman senatorial elite.¹⁸¹ There is truth in that approach. But these incidents also suggest that for the mass of the *Patres* and the *populus*, and amid all the factional politics that were no doubt involved in each one of these cases, the accusation of perpetrating unnecessary and unjustified (i.e., overly aggressive) war had substantial political significance at Rome and could cause a man serious political damage. Such ideas penetrated Roman culture at many levels. For Seneca, it was a truism that "to harm or kill without having first suffered injury to oneself is not anger but mere madness, or the savagery characteristic of wild beasts" (*De Ira* 1.3.3–4); he did not feel he had to argue the point. We are told that Caesar's own troops came close to mutiny as they marched against the Germanic Suebi in 58 B.C., partly on the grounds that they were undertaking a war that was neither morally proper (i.e., the war was aggressive) nor formally voted at Rome, but undertaken merely on account of Caesar's personal ambition (Dio 38.35.2). Even in the crisis with Carthage over the Roman seizure of Sardinia in 238/237, the most controversial Roman diplomatic act of the third century, an argument can be made that the Senate believed Rome was legally in the right.¹⁸² And Michaela Kostial has shown that for

178. On this incident, see Eckstein 1995: 108–9.

179. Astin 1978: 279–83.

180. Discussion: Astin 1978: 123–24. Other cases of such accusations in the mid-second century: see Rich 1993: 57.

181. So, e.g., Harris 1979: 226 and 270–71.

182. See Carey 1996: 203–22.

both the *populus* and for the *Patres*, the righteousness and necessity of a declaration of war usually had to be made clear.¹⁸³

My point, again, is not to portray the Romans as innocents. Nor is it to assert that the Romans always adopted a defensive stance toward foreign states. A Roman squadron violated a treaty with Tarentum in 282 by sailing beyond the Lacinian promontory—and the Senate demanded compensation when the Tarentines attacked it.¹⁸⁴ The Carthaginians certainly had a dark view of Roman action in the Sardinia crisis—and so did Polybius (3.30.3–4).¹⁸⁵ In general, the Roman government in our period responded very harshly to any perceived opposition to its international preferences, and to any perceived disrespect. But the above discussion demonstrates that (a) Rome existed in a world of other harsh and militarized states, which possessed similar militarized and aggressive ideologies, and that this in turn affected Roman conduct, while (b) the Romans' view of the proper way to act toward other polities, though containing strongly aggressive elements (including the assumption that Rome was always in the right, and the habitual use of the diplomacy of coercion), also contained elements conducive to self-restraint. Roman internal discourse on war was defensive in tone, even as its external discourse was often threatening to others; in their world, there was no contradiction. And even if concern for *bellum iustum* and the *pax deorum* only marginally restrained Roman interstate conduct, this was a religiously based restraint missing from Rome's contemporary rivals. It is only when one adopts such a comparative method when analyzing Roman attitudes and behavior—comparing Roman attitudes and behavior with those of the other polities in the system of states of which Rome was a unit—that the true dangers of the Mediterranean interstate situation are revealed.

ROME'S MID-FOURTH-CENTURY TRANSFORMATION

That the Romans' emphasis from the 290s on the goddess Victoria is an indication of exceptional belligerence—part of the Roman *Sonderweg*—is an element in a larger thesis that has become widespread. Even scholars who are willing to accept that in the sixth through the fourth cen-

183. Kostial 1995: 117–24, with Champion 1997: 2.

184. Yet Tarentine action in immediately attacking the Roman squadron, then attacking the Roman garrison at Thurii, and then insulting the Roman envoy sent to remonstrate with them, is hardly an example of restraint. See above, chap. 5, text at n. 160.

185. See above, chap. 5, text at n. 216; cf. Eckstein 1995: 100–102.

turies Rome experienced many decades of brutal external pressure and severe threat argue that the situation reversed from the 340s and 330s: however victimized before, Rome from this point onward transformed itself into an increasingly—indeed, an exceptionally—predatory polity.

The transformation is thought to have been brought about by four developments. First, Rome's victory over its Latin allies in 340–338 gave the Senate control over the large military manpower of Latium as a whole. Second, the new relationships with the more distant but increasingly numerous Italian allies were founded primarily on joint military action and successful war; thus wars strengthened the allied connection, whereas extended peace might let the connection weaken. Third, the new power of Rome resulted in victories that in turn led to the distribution of conquered land to the Roman, Latin, and allied poor, thereby helping resolve the serious social problems caused by land maldistribution that had long bedeviled Rome, the Latin towns, and the polities of the allies. Fourth, the opening of the consulship in 367 to wealthy plebeians, breaking the monopoly of the patrician hereditary aristocracy on the office, provided Rome not merely with new energy at the top, but with a new and ferocious bellicosity among the elite, for the plebeian consular families needed success in war in order to legitimize their new place in society, whereas the old patrician families no longer did.¹⁸⁶

Scholars thus posit that Rome after 340–338 became a true imperialist polity. This was not a Roman response or adaptation to harsh external circumstances but rather was caused by internal developments: a ruling class dependent upon successful war to maintain its legitimacy; an alliance system dependent upon continual war to maintain its coherence; a lower and upper class dependent upon loot and land confiscated from defeated foreigners to help solve problems of land hunger and create social harmony. War thus became a sinister nexus that linked many Roman social interests together. Indeed, to many scholars this fourth-century transformation made war at Rome—and only at Rome—a social, political, and economic necessity. “War was necessary to satisfy the material and ideological needs of the aristocracy . . . and war became necessary to resolve

186. The needs of the new aristocracy: Hölkeskamp 1987: chap. 5, and Hölkeskamp 1993: 20–26; Harris 1990: 503–6; Raaflaub et al. 1992: 32–34 (esp. n. 66) and 50; Raaflaub 1996: 297–98; Rosenstein 1999: 200–201. Solving the land problem at others' expense: Harris 1979: 54; Raaflaub et al. 1992: 29; Rosenstein 1999: 198–99. Increased control over Latin and Italian military manpower: Nicolet 1977: chap. 7; Raaflaub 1996: 288–89. The Italian allies as a war confederation: Heuss 1949: 467; Harris 1984: 89–109; Oakley 1993: 16–18; Raaflaub 1996: 278 and 297–98; Rosenstein 1999: 199.

social and economic problems.”¹⁸⁷ “War [was] . . . practically indispensable”; “the regular occurrence of war was indispensable”; “war financed war and domestic peace, and soon war became indispensable, both for economic and political reasons and to sustain the ideology of the senatorial elite.”¹⁸⁸ Some scholars argue that war in fact had now become so indispensable to the functioning of Roman society that “the Romans will have looked for war when none was ready at hand.”¹⁸⁹ In the terminology of the sociologist Joseph Schumpeter: created by the wars that required it, the war machine now created the wars it required.¹⁹⁰

That Rome underwent a transformation after 340–338 is clear. From this point forward it was startlingly more successful in its competition with other states than it had been for the previous 250 years—first as a monarchy, then as a republic. The scale of the wars Rome fought expanded dramatically, the distance from Rome at which they were fought lengthened; the frequency of years of no war, always low, declined. Yet these circumstances, which would have overwhelmed the earlier Roman city-state, were successfully—if bloodily—accommodated. The geographical reach, capabilities, and ambitions of the Roman Republic ever increased.

This transformation of Rome from an ordinary and indeed not very successful city-state into a polity expanding from success to success needs an explanation, and scholars are correct about the grimly militaristic characteristics of the polity that emerged in this period. Certainly the idea that Rome became an exceptionally aggressive state as a consequence of many decades of existence-threatening external pressure, until Roman society became generally geared for continual and profitable war, is more sophisticated than the hypothesis that Roman culture, for deeply underlying and unknown reasons, simply evinced an exceptional and pathological belligerence toward the outside world from its very beginnings.¹⁹¹

187. Raaflaub 1996: 278 and 296–97, and Raaflaub et al. 1992: 27; Harris 1990: 14.

188. Raaflaub 1996: 296, and Raaflaub et al. 1992: 29 (the first quote); Harris 1984: 14 (the second quote); Raaflaub 1991: 576 (the third quote). Rome alone: see Raaflaub et al. 1992: 34; also Hopkins 1978: 34; Cornell 1995: 365.

189. Oakley 1993: 16. This is also the implication of the entire narrative of Roman wars in Harris 1979: chap. V; see, e.g., 197 (on the First Illyrian War), 217 (the Second Macedonian War: “a new outlet was needed”), 231 (the Third Macedonian War: “Roman hostility and aggressiveness were seeking a new target in 175–172”).

190. Schumpeter 1952: 25 (the general statement), cf. 6 and 29. On Rome, see 51–53, complete with the theory of expansion in order to resolve internal land maldistribution at others’ expense.

191. The hypothesis of Rowland 1983; and cf. Harris 1984: 92, and Harris 1990: 495 and 498–99.

Nevertheless, the emphasis on militarism gets only part of the story. There are severe problems with the thesis that Rome was transformed in the 340s and 330s into a state whose main characteristic was exceptional belligerence—and this must be understood to mean belligerence exceptional in ancient, not modern terms—a state thereafter pushed ever onward by its internal Schumpeterian mechanisms until it had conquered the world.

We have already addressed the theoretical problem here: even this modified view of Roman exceptionalism implies that Rome the victimizer was from about 340–338 in complete control of its interactions with other polities, in control of events, in control of its own reactions to events. International-relations theory views such reconstructions as simplistic. The world of states is complex and synergistic—especially so in anarchic multipolar systems such as fourth-century Italy (or later the third-century Mediterranean), with their multiple simultaneously deciding actors. Competition in such environments is especially complicated and hard to control or predict. The scale of the wars in which Rome engaged did dramatically expand after 340—but it takes two sides to engage in a large-scale war, which means that others were engaged in dramatically large military efforts too.

On the empirical level, several points should also be made. First, it is difficult to believe that the large number of Roman farmers who were continually being drafted for strenuous and dangerous service in the legions in this period would have accepted such a burden unless they thought military service necessary and inevitable for the protection of their families, property, and community. One should never forget that Roman troops were conscripted citizen troops, and a conscripted citizen soldier and his family are going to be politically sensitive to wars of choice as opposed to wars of necessity. The occasional reluctance of the populace to serve called forth from the elite a public rhetoric that stressed not the prospect of profit or movable booty or new land but, precisely, self-defense.¹⁹² Successful war obviously did bring many benefits to all levels of Roman society, including both land and movable loot—and those benefits were certainly intentional.¹⁹³ But the enormous strains that war simultaneously imposed on that society are equally clear: army service was disruptive of

192. See, e.g., Livy 31.6–7: 200 B.C., or the crisis in the army at the start of the First Samnite War in 342 B.C.: stressed by Hölkeskamp 1987: 62–63, cf. Hölkeskamp 1993: 12–13 (with sources).

193. See, for instance, the provisions in the Roman treaty of 212/211 B.C. with the Aetolian League, according to which the Romans were to take all movable loot from cap-

normal economic life for tens of thousands of ordinary farmers; and thousands of those ordinary farmers died in all those Roman defeats—as well, of course, as in the many hard-won victories.¹⁹⁴ As we have seen, accusations of warmongering, or of wishing war for personal reasons, could be politically damaging accusations against the elite.¹⁹⁵

It is wrong to think of the *populus Romanus*, then, as either fools or a mass of professional pirates.¹⁹⁶ Nor should the Roman aristocracy be thought of as a single corporate entity pursuing its corporate interests through constant war and even unnecessary war. There is good evidence to suggest that factional, family, and personal jealousies within the Senate were intense, and often acted as a brake against irresponsible glory hunting by individuals. Moreover, most aristocrats in fact spent their terms of office not in dramatic battle and glory (despite the way Livy sometimes reads), but in ordinary administration; such men had strong reasons not to allow excessive opportunities to others—and in the continual senatorial controversies over whether to extend another man's command in the field, or to grant another man a triumph, we see precisely this process at work.¹⁹⁷

In understanding assertive Roman action within the Mediterranean anarchy, we also need to consider that as a result of almost two centuries of severe outside attacks down to 340 B.C., the Roman governing elite of the Middle Republic may have been more sensitive to possible security threats than modern scholars are. As Kurt Raaflaub says, Rome's difficult early history produced a Roman governing elite that was “nervous and highly security-conscious, all too willing to take preventive actions whenever they perceived a possible threat, or to accept offers of alliance that to us seem to have entailed more problems than advantages.”¹⁹⁸ This insight helps explain central factors in Roman expansion that we

tured enemy cities (the Aetolians were to gain the actual cities and territory): inscriptional text and supporting literary sources in Schmidt 1969: 258–66 (no. 536). Cynical commentary: Derow 2003: 55–56.

194. Defeats: Rosenstein 1990: 179–203 for the long list (see text above at n. 159).

195. See text above at nn. 148, 177, and 178.

196. Despite Veyne 1975: 819; similar: Cornell 1995: 367.

197. See esp. Rich 1993: 52–60; cf. already Sherwin-White 1980: 178. Note that the aristocratic explanation for Roman wars and expansion in Raaflaub 1996 (esp. 148) does not sit well with his explanation for Athenian war and expansion, which allegedly was caused primarily by the internal pressures of democracy, not aristocracy (above, chap. 3, text at n. 143). If dissimilarly constituted states act similarly in the international arena, this weakens the argument for purely internal causation of such behavior: see Rose 1998: 148.

198. Raaflaub 1996: 292; contrast the cynical statement of Harris 1979: 189, on Roman alliance making.

stressed above in chapter 5: the Roman sensitivity toward perceived threats to security; the Roman willingness to accept problematic pleas for protection and offers of alliance from less powerful states; the Roman willingness to take preventive and indeed provocative action against states they perceived as possible threats. Political scientists would say that such attitudes and such conduct tend to be normal for states existing within a heavily militarized anarchy.¹⁹⁹

But Raaflaub also tends to argue that after 338 external threats to Roman security, while sincerely perceived, were not real.²⁰⁰ The theme of chapter 5 above asserted the opposite: that after 338 B.C., as before, the threats were indeed real; as John Rich concludes, "The senate never began a war without reasons, just because it had to have a war somewhere."²⁰¹ The crucial point is that Raaflaub's description of the Roman stance toward the external world and the type of actions to which it led fits not merely Rome but most Classical and Hellenistic states. The result was conduct from all sides that, while natural given the pressures of the anarchy, itself contributed powerfully to the overall war-prone character of the system. We have seen in chapter 5 that the other polities with which Rome fiercely competed in fourth-century and early third-century Italy, and later in the western Mediterranean throughout the third century, were themselves highly security-conscious even when powerful; they were geared for war and were habituated to it occurring; they all tended to take the diplomatic risks involved in accepting offers of alliance from less powerful states (in the case of Carthage—to cite three famous cases—from Motya in Sicily in the sixth century, from the Mamertines in Sicily in the third, from the Torboletae in Spain in the third); and—like the Romans—they were often belligerent and aggressive. But this in turn means that Roman security concerns were real, for all these polities—including Rome—were functionally similar. When Rome was still a medium-sized state, we are talking of the other states within the highly competitive Italian anarchic system; and later, when Rome had become a great state, we mean those great and powerful states that Rome found in the harsh wider world of the Mediterranean.

The Romans were successful after the 330s in expanding their power and influence, and they intended to be: having survived threats to their existence, they sought to exercise as much power and control as they

199. See above, chap. 2.

200. See Raaflaub 1991: 576.

201. Rich 1993: 60.

could over their surrounding environment, and they sought, by every means, always to increase that power and control—as all states tend to do.²⁰² There were certainly elements in the Roman situation after the mid-fourth century that were conducive to increased bellicosity and aggressiveness. Growing Roman resources after midcentury gave Rome advantages in the savage competition for power and security that was going on beyond the boundaries of Latium. The new plebeian nobility did bring vigor to high office, and intensified the rivalry within the senatorial aristocracy for honor. The enlarged network of friendly and allied states with which Rome was now able to surround itself created a defensive buffer zone around the metropole, but these polities' own enmities with their neighbors also led to increased Roman intervention along the periphery of its influence—a periphery that the Senate was concerned to protect but also to enlarge, for it provided both status and power, and its existence pointed back ultimately toward state survival.²⁰³

Victory brought benefits—it always does. Loot was always an important element of victory throughout the entire Mediterranean system: see Polybius on the wild greed of Hellenistic soldiery (10.17.1–2); or Livy and Pliny on the huge estates of the Barcid family on conquered land south of Carthage (Livy 33.48.1; Plin. *NH* 7.93). Rome, too, confiscated land from defeated Italian states, and often some of that land ended up in the hands of new Roman settlers.²⁰⁴ Thus the war between Rome and Etruscan Vulci in the 280s ended with the confiscation of one-third of Vulci's territory, including rich farmland. On part of that territory the Senate in 273 ordered the founding of the Latin *colonia* of Cosa: with twenty-five hundred adult male settlers from Rome and Latium, the total population may have numbered nine thousand—a large enterprise. But Cosa, like all *coloniae* established by the Senate in this period, had above all a military purpose (not a social purpose)—as is proven by its massive walls and towers: it was a bulwark against pirates and perhaps against Celts, and probably also intended to secure Roman control over the central Etruscan coast.²⁰⁵ Along the Celtic frontier, as Phyllis Culham has shown, there

202. See Liska 1978: 4–6.

203. Ibid. As a general rule, alliance systems provide strength to a state but also increase the frequency of involvement in the local conflicts of allies: see the studies in Geller and Singer 1998: 63–64, 83–84, 106–7. Harris 1984: 92, denies the structural impact of the alliance system, on the grounds that Roman society was pathological enough to produce war and conquest by itself.

204. A fact emphasized by Harris, by Raafaub et al., and by Rosenstein: see above, n. 186.

205. The purpose of Cosa: Barker and Rasmussen 1998: 262–65.

were certainly numerous large *coloniae* established by the Senate, but they were often not located on the best agricultural land, but rather at sites that controlled the traditional invasion routes toward the Tiber Valley, no matter how economically unattractive those sites were in other respects.²⁰⁶ No doubt a subsidiary benefit of confiscating territory from defeated enemies was that it sometimes allowed the resettling of landless Romans and Latins on land that once belonged to others. But consequence is not cause: the overriding purpose of the establishment of Roman settlers on confiscated land in Italy was military.²⁰⁷

Rome as it emerged from the 340s and 330s was a militaristic and assertive state, a state used to war. But it will not do to find the key factor behind exceptional Roman success after the 330s in characteristics—militarism, bellicosity, and stern diplomatic assertiveness—that Rome shared with all the major polities of fourth-century Italy as well as (later) with all great powers in the third-century and early second-century Mediterranean. Indeed, one may stress that Rome shared these characteristics with every large premodern polity around the planet—from Japan to Mesoamerica.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, Roman militarism and assertiveness had been characteristic of the Roman state long before the mid-fourth century; it was not new, although in the period before the mid-fourth century the Romans had been far less successful in their assertiveness than they were to become. Therefore, although many modern scholars have stressed them, it is unclear how large was the impact of the internal transformations of the mid-fourth century on those particular characteristics. Moreover, given that Rome of the sixth or fifth century as well as Rome of the third century shared those militaristic and bellicose characteristics with most Mediterranean states and certainly with all its major competitors, the causes behind the development of those characteristics are not likely in general to lie so much internally, within special pathologies of Roman culture and society—because those characteristics were not special in the ancient Mediterranean world. Modern scholars may well see Rome as a pathologically militaristic and assertive state in modern terms, but they are therefore still looking in the wrong place—or at least, in not enough places—for the explanation both for that militarism

206. Culham 1982.

207. This is why Rome was not alone in employing this technique of control over strategic sites: on the military colonies of Tarentum and Carthage, see above, chap. 5, text at nn. 127 and 189. On *coloniae* as an institution, see below, chap. 7.

208. This is the grim conclusion to be drawn from the essays in Raaflaub and Rosenstein 1999.

and for Roman success. They must raise their eyes from the level of the unit and look externally, at the broader picture, at the harsh environment in which Rome existed, at the pressures that all ancient states were under from the anarchy in which they had to exist.

The true origins of exceptional Roman power within its Hobbesian interstate environment will be discussed in the final chapter. Without the development of militarism, bellicosity, and assertiveness, Rome would not have survived as a state. But there are other reasons why it prevailed.

CONCLUSION

The evidence is abundant that Rome was a militarized, bellicose, and diplomatically aggressive state that strove to acquire more and more power in the interstate system of which it was a part. Rome's senatorial aristocracy possessed a warrior ethos; service in the army was their primary life experience as young men; courage in battle was viewed as a primary virtue; large military achievement was the primary road to fame, influence, and power within the state. The *populus Romanus* accepted that war was frequent, that many men would be called annually to serve, and that war was often profitable both to the state and to individuals (though dangerous, too, and often grim, for Rome suffered many defeats on the battlefield, and few victories were easy). The Romans rewarded bravery in single combat, especially on the part of aristocrats; they prayed fervently for victory and built temples to the goddess Victoria; they celebrated victories in a spectacular fashion. Significant religious festivals, celebrated annually, had a strong military aura. Ideologically, Romans preferred that Rome be large rather than small, and to grow larger rather than smaller; and they persevered in wars with great stubbornness, until victory.

The evidence that Rome was an exceptionally militarized, bellicose, and diplomatically aggressive state among those states making up the ancient interstate system is, however, far less convincing. In the discussion of the Greek interstate world in chapters 3 and 4, and in the discussion of the West in chapter 5, we have seen that the heavily militaristic and bellicose characteristics of middle-Republican Rome were very similar to those of the states with which Rome competed in that environment for survival and power. A deeper understanding of the historical process thus requires that we move away from an introverted historiography that stresses only Rome and its alleged exceptionally vicious or even pathological particularities, when in terms of militarism and belli-

cosity what we are examining is a savage Mediterranean environment that led everywhere and for every state to a grim contest for survival and power.

Thus Macedonian religious festivals were more warlike and violent than those at Rome; expansionist ideologies at Athens, in the Achaean League (a middle-sized power), and even at Cos (a small state) were far more explicit. The Carthaginians sacked cities more brutally, and were just as stubborn and persevering in fighting wars to the finish. Persians, Greeks, Carthaginians, and Celts all praised and greatly honored single man-to-man combat on the part of leaders and commanding generals. Greek states, in both the Classical and the Hellenistic periods, prayed fervently for victory and worshipped the goddess Victory (*Νίκη*). Greeks celebrated victory in ways usually (though not always) different from the Roman triumph, but their ways were just as spectacular: the fifteen thousand captured enemy suits of armor on display at the capital of the Aetolian League; the Battleship Monument of Antigonos II; the Victory Monument of Attalus I; the great military procession of Antiochos IV. In the Greek states, as at Rome, large military achievement was the primary road to personal fame, political influence, and power—and the same was true in Persia, at Carthage, and (we can assume) among the Celtic tribal peoples.

There were, in fact, elements in Roman internal discourse that were somewhat conducive to self-restraint in the interstate world, while there is less evidence of such trends toward self-restraint in the internal discourse of the Hellenistic Greek powers. The Romans' gods required not only that a *bellum iustum* begin in a ritually proper way, with warning given to the potential enemy, but that a *bellum iustum* be in some sense defensive. We should not push this too far: interstate situations in antiquity were often complex and morally ambiguous, which allowed for flexibility by decision-making elites—and allowed for decisions taken in brutal state interest. The phenomenon was widespread among the Greeks,²⁰⁹ but the potential for flexibility of moral interpretation of situations was strong at Rome as well—especially because tradition allowed that responding to an attack upon a Roman “ally” was as defensive a *bellum iustum* as responding to an attack on Rome itself. That left a wide realm indeed for action. Yet strong feeling about the defensive nature of *bellum iustum* could still be appealed to among the *populus Romanus* in the mid-first century B.C. (as with the tribune Ateius's cursing of Crassus and his army as they departed for the unjust war against Parthia in 54).

209. See above, chap. 3, text at n. 15.

It must have been even stronger in the far less sophisticated period that is the subject of our study. In our period, accusations that public officials had begun wars unjustly (i.e., too aggressively) certainly carried political weight at Rome.²¹⁰ Accusations that policies were being formulated that were too provocative of other communities also found resonance.²¹¹

While (again) these feelings should not be exaggerated, we find little of such a moralizing tradition in the internal discourse of the Hellenistic Greek polities—whether large or small, whether monarchy, or federal league, or city-state oligarchy or democracy. To take the medium-sized Greek polity of Achaea as an example: Aratus of Sicyon suffered no criticism within Achaea in the 230s for breaking important and traditional but informal Greek norms and seizing and enslaving neutral athletes on their way to the Panhellenic festival at Nemea during his campaign against Argos; and seventy years later Polybius's own Achaean faction discussed whether to support Rome against Macedon without acknowledging the existence of a formal Achaean treaty with Rome that mandated such support; it never entered the discussion.²¹² We may similarly doubt that much moralizing discourse existed at Carthage or among the Celts.²¹³

After 338 Roman power began to expand in dramatic fashion. This was a development of extraordinary importance for the history of Italy and the Mediterranean. But we should be careful about hypothesizing that the key to the success of Rome after 338 lay in a new and exceptional internal bellicosity, a bellicosity much more intense than that during Rome's previous period of existence, when it had been only a modestly successful state, or—even more important—a bellicosity that was exceptional among the polities that populated the cruel interstate environment in which Rome existed. Yet this position is the view of most modern scholars of the Middle Republic.

Such scholars argue that the fundamental reason for Roman success

210. M. Claudius Marcellus and Syracuse in 210; L. Manlius Vulso and the Celts of Asia Minor in 188; Popilius Laenas and the Ligurians in 173. The accusations of Cato the Younger against Caesar in 55 and Capito against Crassus in 54 thus derived from a long tradition.

211. The criticism of Flaminius regarding the Celts of the Po Valley in 232 (Polyb. 2.21.8–9, probably from the contemporary senator Q. Fabius Pictor); the successful campaign of M. Porcius Cato (especially against Iuventius Thalna) to prevent a war with Rhodes in 168/167, on grounds that it would be unjust.

212. Discussion of both incidents in chap. 4, above.

213. On the approval of Punic expansion by the chief Carthaginian god Melqart and others, see Hoyos 2003: 107–8 (Livy 21.21.9, cf. Zon. 8.22. On the violent iconography of Melqart, see Lancel 1997: 207.

after the 330s was that Rome in this period was transformed into a predator state of exceptional ferocity. Developments in society and culture that allegedly produced this alleged internal transformation include the need of a new plebeian senatorial aristocracy to legitimate its new position in Roman society through exceptional military achievement; a new dependence on solving the social problem of land hunger among the Roman populace by distributing land to the Roman poor taken by Roman armies at others' expense; a growing alliance system in Italy whose interstate relationships were based on success in war; an increasingly bellicose religious environment and ideology, including a new and self-confident worship of victory. These developments transformed Rome into a Schumpeterian war machine.

I have argued above that this is an exaggerated picture. It is doubtful that after the 330s the Senate or the plebeian aristocracy within it was a unified class that acted in a corporate self-interest to foment wars. Rather, the Senate often appears divided, riven by faction and jealousies among individuals (and perhaps among groups of individuals), overseeing an administrative structure (insofar as there was one) in which some men won great glory while many men did not; and in war this officer class and its children certainly did its share of the suffering and dying. Such factors would have significantly inhibited the Senate as an institution from acquiescing in—let alone encouraging—unnecessary wars for the sake of one man's glory, or for that of the purported senatorial class. The *populus Romanus* benefited occasionally both from the loot and from the significant land distributions that came from wars, but they were also the farmers who fought those wars, wars that caused great economic disruption to their lives; moreover, large Roman casualties among the ordinary soldiery were usual in any fighting. Thus the populace, too, is unlikely to have undertaken war lightly, without being offered good reasons. Shared experience in war did cement the allies' relationships with Rome—but war was as disruptive economically to the fundamentally agricultural economies of the allies as it was to that of Rome, and allied losses in war were often serious. The Romans did not need continuous war to keep control over the allies, though successful wars helped to do so; rather, primarily they needed to protect the allies—and perhaps to threaten them. If the allies played a role in increased Roman warmaking it was that the increasing number of allied states (and merely so-called friendly states) on the periphery of Roman power and influence meant more calls upon Rome for help in local conflicts on that periphery—and hence increased Roman military interventions there. But modern stud-

ies indicate this is a common phenomenon of alliance systems. Thus it does not point to any special bellicosity of a “Roman war confederation.”²¹⁴ Finally, worship of Victory increased at Rome in the 290s because of the great military crisis of the War of Sentinum, which convulsed central Italy and led the Romans to ignore even their own laws in order to place experienced generals in the consulship; it should be linked to the increased worship of Salus, Safety, that also occurred in this period. Increased worship of Victory at Rome in the 290s is thus not an indication of the self-confident aggression of a society transformed into an aggressor more vicious and predatory than any of its neighbors—but, rather, it is an indication of perfectly understandable anxiety. In sum, the thesis of Rome as an exceptionally savage Schumpeterian war machine, manufacturing the wars it needed for internal social reasons, has significant weaknesses. This cannot be the whole story.²¹⁵

This is not to deny in the least that the elite that ran the Roman state desired the expansion of Roman power and desired increased Roman influence, power, and control over its interstate environment—the more power, influence, and control, the better. Indeed, the elite no doubt viewed such expansion of power as its primary patriotic task. But the origins of the Roman drive for expansion neither were unusual in the Romans’ world nor came from any special pathology within Roman culture—however militaristic Roman culture may look to us. The pathology lay mostly within the anarchic system of which Rome was a unit, and it was shared by most other units within the system—primarily because of the pressures of that anarchic environment. As John H. Herz, one of the founders of international-systems theory, puts it, states striving to attain security from attack “are driven to acquire more and more power in order to escape the impact of the power of others, [but] none can ever feel entirely secure in such a world of competing units.”²¹⁶ In anarchic systems, in other words, a state bent on survival will distrust others; there is no central authority to which it can turn for help, no way to punish an aggressor except through exercise of one’s own power; and the best way to become secure is to be the most powerful state in the system. Hence derives the

214. See above, n. 203.

215. Cf. the comment of Bender 2003: 89: it is only a polity that has nothing to fear that does whatever suits itself best in international life and in which domestic politics and policies are the primary determinants of foreign policy. That was never the Roman situation in this period. Rather, Rome at this point was like most ancient polities: its foreign policy was determined primarily (which does not mean solely) by external pressures.

216. Herz 1950: 157; cf. now Mearsheimer 2001: 36.

desire to accumulate power.²¹⁷ These are the characteristics of every state in an interstate anarchy; they were characteristic of Rome; and they were characteristic of all the states with which Rome savagely competed for survival and power in our period. The Romans, of course, had reason to beware the power of others: the destruction of the city by the Senone Celts in the 390s was the primary trauma of Roman history, and taught a terrible lesson; Hannibal taught another.²¹⁸ The competitors with Rome within the system were as fierce as Rome, as aggressive, bellicose, and militarized, and for the same reasons—which is why it is not an accident that Rome under the Republic suffered ninety severe battlefield defeats.

In such a system there was danger in not responding powerfully to challenges to one's legitimate security interests, and yet such challenges frequently arose from the actions of other expansionist, power-maximizing polities. The danger was that in not responding to a challenge one would be perceived as weak, and hence vulnerable: "the reputation for power *is* power" (Hobbes), and a reputation for hesitation and weakness is the opposite. This meant also that the instigator of any challenge to one's interests tended to be seen immediately as an enemy, and a threatening response to any perceived *iniuria* at the interstate level was perceived as both natural and necessary, serving to reestablish Rome's interests and status, and hence its safety: "We will be less despised if we avenge an injury," says Seneca; overt anger at injury "dispels contempt . . . and frightens bad men" (*De Ira* 2.11). Seneca's point is that if you do not frighten "bad men" by avenging a perceived slight, they will do you even more harm.²¹⁹ But when the principle of responding harshly to any perceived injury was held by all, and was combined with the ineffectiveness of ancient compellence diplomacy in resolving interstate disputes peaceably (the result of such compellence diplomacy being often instead the initiation of public contests of resolve, from which honor societies had great difficulty escaping), the final outcome was often war.²²⁰

The exceptional nature of the success of Roman expansion after the

217. These are, of course, the principles of the security dilemma, self-help, and power maximization discussed in detail above in chap. 2; cf. Mearsheimer 2001: 32–34.

218. On the impact of the Celts, see esp. Williams 2001. On the impact of Hannibal, see, e.g., Siebert 1995: 242.

219. See discussion in Mattern 2001.

220. One should stress again that Rome was not unique in such attitudes. To take one example: the passion among Hellenistic Greek states—large, medium, and small—to avenge defeat and loss of territory and resources by reconquering them as soon as possible, along with a propaganda emphasis on reconquest—i.e., reassertion of injured status (as well as regaining real power, of course). See above, chap. 4, text at n. 70.

330s still needs an explanation. What we have established above is that the sources of exceptional Roman success, within the anarchic Mediterranean system of which it was one unit, did not lay solely in Rome's militarization, bellicosity, and diplomatic assertiveness. Such characteristics were real, they were highly important, and they permitted Rome to survive; but they are not enough to explain how Rome prevailed, for those characteristics can be found in every major state in the Mediterranean system, every second-rank state, and most minor states—and necessarily so, given the nature and pressures of the system. But what is common to all cannot explain Rome. The answer for exceptional Roman success must be sought instead not in the brutal characteristics that Rome shared with almost all states within the cruel system of which it was one unit, but instead in those characteristics that Rome did not share with other states. These are what made Rome exceptional, and this is the subject to which we turn in our final chapter.

Roman Exceptionalism and Nonexceptionalism

The previous discussion has established that Rome was a highly militaristic state, but that it existed in a highly militarized and anarchic environment, and within that environment it was not exceptional in the intensity of its militarism. Further, the primordial fact of constant warfare in the ancient Mediterranean and indeed throughout the entire premodern world means that the question regarding Roman exceptionalism is not why Rome was constantly at war, because ancient states often were. But if the basic reason for Rome's exceptional success within the Mediterranean multipolar anarchy was not the exceptional bellicosity and militarism of Roman society, what, then, were the reasons for Rome's success? This chapter begins by offering a different view of the mid-fourth-century B.C. transformation at Rome and how it set the stage for the succeeding era of extraordinary Roman expansion of influence, power, and territory. The fundamental question is not why Roman society was militaristic and often at war, but why the Roman city-state was able to create a very large and durable territorial polity when so many other city-states failed at that task. Athens, Sparta, and Thebes all ultimately failed at it in European Greece; Carthage ultimately failed at it in North Africa; Syracuse failed at it in Sicily; Tarentum failed at it in southern Italy.¹ Our study will then conclude with an analysis of the de-

1. Athens, Sparta, and Thebes: above, chap. 3. Tarentum, Syracuse, and Carthage: above, chap. 5.

cision by the Roman Senate and people in 200 B.C. to answer the Greek states' calls for help against Philip V of Macedon and Antiochus III of the Seleucid empire. The two wars that followed this decision shifted the balance of power in the Mediterranean decisively in Rome's favor and brought Roman influence and power permanently into the Greek world. In a real sense, it laid the foundation of Roman political preponderance throughout the entire Mediterranean. Yet the decision itself was of the type that we have seen throughout this study was normal (not exceptional) for a great ancient state to make when confronted by requests for help from lesser states, under the pressures of an anarchic and heavily militarized interstate system and the multiple dangers such a system produced.

ROMAN EXCEPTIONALISM

It is not stern militarism but Rome's ability to assimilate outsiders and to create a large and stable territorial hegemony that makes Rome stand out from other city-states. The norm in the ancient world was that large territorial states were created by kings, not by city-state republics; Rome is the enormous exception.² The style and Hobbesian justification for such monarchical hegemonies is clear on the inscription on the tomb of the Persian shah-an-shah Darius I (ruled 520–483 B.C.), at Naqsh-e Rostam in southern Iran: "I am Darius the Great King, king of kings, king of countries of all kinds of men, one king over many, one lord over many, king of the earth far and wide. . . . When Ahura-Mazda the great god saw that the earth was in commotion, thereafter He bestowed it upon me, made me king; . . . I put down the commotion, put it in its place; what I said to people, that they did." Monarchical regimes, then, were famous in antiquity for imposing order—stern order—upon the prevailing anarchy.³

Yet the premodern territorial states created by kings, the order created by monarchical violence out of the prevailing disorder, were themselves inherently fragile. Their power and legitimacy rested primarily upon the personal capabilities of the individual rulers of each dynasty—

2. See Raaflaub 1991: 570–71; Raaflaub et al. 1992: 314.

3. Text and discussion: Kuhrt 2001: 103–7. The same emphasis on the Achaemenid king as the alternative to disorder and on his putting down of disorder appears in Darius's famous trilingual inscription at Behistun, as well as on a long inscription of Darius's son, Xerxes: Kuhrt 107–9. Two thousand years later the imposition of order was also a favorite motif of the court historians of the Mughal emperors of India: see Edwardes 1968: 25.

as we see in the Hellenistic period (above, chapter 4)—and those personal capabilities varied. Here, too, Rome was exceptional; the large territorial state created by the Romans was not primarily the work of single titanic personalities, nor (on the other hand) was it as fragile as the large dynastic empires. It withstood pressures and calamities that would have destroyed a dynastic state: dozens of battlefield defeats, including catastrophes such as Caudine Forks and Lautulae at the hands of Samnites (321 and 313), Allia River, Camarinum, and Arretium at the hands of Celts (390, 299, and 284), Heraclea and Asculum at the hands of Greeks (280 and 279), Drepana and Lake Trasimene and Cannae at the hands of Carthaginians (249, 217, and 216).⁴

Greece in the Hellenistic period did see the rise in power of the Achaean League and the Aetolian League—like Rome, expansionist and quite integrative alliance systems based on city-states; they evolved partly as efforts at cooperation among poleis to balance the power of Macedon. In this sense, the Romans were not totally alone.⁵ But the Aetolian and Achaean Leagues were not dominated by a single city-state; there were few cases of shared citizenship among member cities; they were politically quite fragile, tending strikingly toward fragmentation because of conflicts of interest among autonomous cities; and neither one can compare in size or longevity to the system established by Rome.⁶ Rome, then, was by far the largest, most successful, and least fragile of these political entities, the only alliance system in antiquity founded on the domination of a single city-state that was also successful over the long term. Importantly, it was also the most integrative in character.

To understand the Roman ability to integrate both friends and former enemies into a durable alliance system—and eventually to integrate both friends and former enemies into a system of citizenship—one starts from the fact that the societies of central Italy were more open to immigration of outsiders than were the contemporary societies of Greece,

4. The large number of Roman defeats of the battlefield: see above, chap. 6. The Athenian city-state domination of an alliance system in the Aegean was the second most successful experiment, lasting about seventy years (though with much turmoil), then brought down in military defeat by rivals and balancers.

5. The Aetolian League: see now Scholten 2000. Its inclusiveness beyond the original Aetolian *ethnos*: ibid. 29 n. 1 (Amphissa); 44–45 (Heraclea Trachiotis). The Achaean League: Urban 1979. Inclusiveness: see, e.g., Polyb. 2.44.4–5 (Megalopolis).

6. Thus Argos, the second largest city in the Achaean League, defected in the 220s and again in the 190s, and the league itself was destroyed in the 140s by its inability to absorb an unwilling Sparta. Limits to the inclusiveness of the Aetolian League: Scholten 2000: 232–33. Fragility of earlier Greek leagues because of the ferocity of the culture of city-state autonomy: Beck 1997.

which tended toward virulent exclusivity. Peaceful migrations of early Italic clans and other groups from one polity to another are well attested, including at Rome.⁷ At Rome, the integration of others was eased by the legends surrounding the founding of the city, which stressed that it had always been made up of disparate incoming ethnic groups: Latins, Sabines, Etruscans, even (it was alleged) both Greeks and Trojans. The classic example of peaceful immigration and integration in this early period is the Sabine chief Attus Clausus, who migrated down from the hills to Rome with his many Sabine retainers about 504 B.C.—and became consul in 495, having Latinized his name to Appius Claudius Sabinus, thus becoming the ancestor of the great Roman aristocratic clan of the Claudii.⁸

Immigrants such as Attus Clausus were probably attracted to Rome in the late sixth century by the rich farmland south of the city, and because even under its early kings (ca. 600–510 B.C.) Rome was already the largest city in Latium. The extensive remains of sixth-century buildings that have been excavated in the center of Rome since 1945 attest to the accuracy of the ancient tradition that underlined the large size of the city already by this time. The large city of about 500 B.C. also conforms to Polybius's account of the first Roman-Carthaginian treaty, dated to the founding year of the Republic (i.e., 509 B.C.), where Rome already claims to speak for significant parts of Latium.⁹

The founding of the Republic coincided with increased turmoil in central Italy. For the next 130 years Rome and its neighbors in Latium faced raids and invasions from the hill-dwelling Aequi and Volsci—part of the same population movement from the Apennine hill country into the plains that brought the Samnite conquest of Campania after 450.¹⁰ Even a large city-state such as Rome would have had great difficulties surviving this military challenge on its own without an alliance system created with its neighbors. The Roman creation of such an alliance system is traditionally dated to 493 B.C.: the *foedus Cassianum* between Rome and the other

7. Fundamental discussion: Ampolo 1970/1971: 37–68.

8. On the foundation legends, see Cornell 1995: 57–73. Ideological impact: Eckstein 2000: 872. Attus Clausus (a historical personage): see Livy 4.3–5 and the inscription *ILS* 212; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 11.24. Other examples (though legendary): see Cornell 1995: 144 and 157.

9. Polyb. 3.22.11–12; cf. Raaflaub 1996: 285 and n. 46. The view that Rome ca. 500 B.C. was still a primitive place—see, e.g., Alföldi 1965—has been refuted by the archaeology: see Ampolo 1987: 77–87, and Ampolo 1988: esp. 231–39. The great Rome of the Tarquins still has its doubters, however: see Gabba 1988: 5–12.

10. Discussion: Cornell 1995: 266 and 304–7.

twenty-nine city-states of Latium. Under the terms of this Treaty of Cassius, the combined military forces of all Latium would take the field in instances of attack from the hill peoples; booty from success would be divided equally between Rome on the one hand and the rest of the Latin cities on the other; and (it seems) the combined army would be led by a general sent out from Rome. "The alliance made organized resistance possible and saved Latium from being overrun."¹¹ The balance of military power in favor of Rome indicated in the Treaty of Cassius was based on Rome's victory over the combined forces of the Latins at the battle of Lake Regillus in 496, and the domineering aspects of the treaty should not be minimized. But Rome had now found a way, via diplomacy, to mobilize the resources of Latium as a whole—though, conversely, it also meant taking on the burden of protecting Latin states closer to the hills than Rome. The treaty of 493 was thus an early exercise of Roman skill in alliance management.¹²

The Treaty of Cassius also codified informal Latin customs that were already conducive toward mutual integration of the thirty polities. The Latin city-states held annual festivals to worship the Latin gods together, and these festivals may have been somewhat helpful toward establishing a feeling of community; yet perhaps not too much should be made of them, since the Etruscan cities had a similar custom and it was not the precursor to any sort of unified action.¹³ It was probably far more important for Latium that by custom the early Latin city-states already enjoyed mutual rights of *commercium*, *conubium*, and *migratio* (Livy 8.14; Cic. *Caec.* 35). *Commercium* allowed the citizens of all Latin city-states to enter into contracts enforceable by the courts of any Latin city-state where the contract was made. This legal safeguard encouraged mutual commerce and, even more significantly, enabled the citizens of one Latin city to own real estate in another. The recognition of commonality was even more evident in the second right: *conubium* gave the citizen of a Latin city the right of legal marriage with a partner from any other Latin city, the children of such marriages being legally legitimate (facilitating the inheritance of property) and citizens of the city of the father (automatically inheriting all citizen rights). The third right emphasized

11. Ibid. 299.

12. On the treaty: ibid. 295–97 and 299–301. Romans always the commanders of the coalition army: so Festus, p. 276 Lindsey, now with Cornell 1995: 299. The Treaty of Cassius is certainly authentic: inscribed on a bronze pillar in the Forum at Rome, it was still readable there in Cicero's time (*Pro Balbo* 53; cf. Livy 2.33.9).

13. On the Latin custom, see Cornell 1995: 66–68 and 194–95.

Latin commonality even more strongly: *migratio* permitted the citizens of each Latin city to gain citizenship in any of the other states simply by taking up permanent residence there. The treaty of 493 evidently made the custom of *migratio* official (Dion. Hal. 6.95), and this may hold for *conubium* and *commercium* as well (Dion. Hal. 6.63–4 and 7.53.5).¹⁴

The openness of the Latin polities to each other contrasts starkly with the exclusionary attitude of Greek poleis: ownership of real estate was forbidden to noncitizens in most Greek cities; Athenian law from 451 B.C. (almost a half-century later than the Treaty of Cassius) made legally illegitimate and a noncitizen any child born of a marriage in which one parent was a noncitizen; it took a formal vote of the assembly to grant Athenian citizenship to a noncitizen even if the family had been resident in Athens for decades. And while *isopoliteia* (the granting of mutual citizenship between the populations of cities) was a feature we find in the Hellenistic period, it was usually only between two cities; nothing like a territorially large thirty-state mutual citizenship ever developed, not even among the Hellenistic Greek leagues of poleis established on the basis of equality. Latium already in the 490s was thus well ahead of the Greek city-states in the creation of an integrated territorial state out of separate cities—and indeed the Greeks never caught up, nor did they wish to do so.¹⁵

Rome was always by far the largest city in Latium, already controlling in the late sixth century perhaps a third of Latium on its own.¹⁶ Yet we should not be misled by this: the scale of Rome's territory was still small. The greatest military achievement in the first 130 years of the Republic was the conquest of the city of Veii, about 396 B.C.; but Veii was only twelve miles from Rome. Even following the incorporation of Veii, the *ager Romanus* in the 390s B.C. covered only about eleven hundred square miles—roughly two-thirds the area of Classical Attica.¹⁷ Moreover, the conquest of Veii was followed by the destruction of Rome itself by Celtic invaders from the north, about 390. It took the Romans decades to recover from this disaster, and the trauma of the Celtic destruc-

14. The three Latin rights: Cornell 1995: 295–97. The relation of these customs to what was apparently in the *foedus Cassianum*: Alföldi 1965: 115–17; cf. Cornell 1995: 457 n. 17.

15. Stern restrictions in the granting of citizenship at Athens (enduring into the Hellenistic age): see Osborne 1981: esp. 5–9; Sealey 1987: esp. 23–25.

16. See Cornell 1995: 204–8.

17. Roman territory in the early fourth century vs. that of Classical Athens: Raafaub 1991: 572.

tion of the city left a permanent mark of fear on the Roman psyche: How could it not?¹⁸

Yet—quite amazingly—Rome eventually recovered from the Celtic catastrophe. One source of its recuperative power was a relatively unified society. True, the early Republic was riddled with tensions between rich and poor, and between a hereditary aristocracy (the patricians) and the rest of the population (the plebeians); but unlike many ancient states, these tensions never led to full-scale civil war, because the Romans evolved a talent for political compromise. The patrician aristocracy always gave in to plebeian demands when the pressure became severe. Thus by the 360s the plebeians had gained written law (to prevent arbitrary decision making in the courts), and debt reform (to prevent enslavement of persons for nonpayment of debt), special officers to protect plebeian civil rights (the tribunes of the plebeians), and the wealthier plebeian families were being elected to high state offices and were thus entering the Senate. Though patricians always retained social prestige, in the end the majority of the Senate and elected officeholders were plebeians. A relatively unified citizenry made the survival of the city possible amid the violence and indeed disasters of interstate anarchy. Conversely, ancient observers thought that the continuing severe threats from outside helped strengthen the tradition of political compromise (see Polyb. 6.18.2–4).¹⁹

A relatively unified society was a necessary condition for success in the ferocious competition among states for security and power in antiquity—but it was not a sufficient condition. In the Athenian case, citizen manpower losses incurred in warfare were eventually so severe (especially between 431 and 404 B.C.) that Athens became too weak to maintain its hold on its subject allies. But Athenian manpower weakness, especially among the hoplite class, was caused directly by the exclusivity of the Athenian citizen body. The difficulty Athenian culture had in accepting new citizens (i.e., in the enfranchisement of outsiders) made it difficult to create large reserves of citizen manpower. Thus only a long period of peace could replenish the Athenian citizen body when it had been depleted by war (thus restoring the fundamentals of Athenian power)—and

18. See Raaflaub 1996: 287, and now esp. Williams 2001: chap. 4. The Roman tradition that although most of the city was burnt by the Celts at least the Capitoline Hill held out may be false: see Williams, 150–57.

19. This is an enormous and complex topic, but few will disagree with the above conclusions. See esp. Raaflaub 1986: 1–51. The theme of book 6 of Polybius—the famous discussion of the structure of the Roman state and society—is the Roman genius for political compromise: see Walbank 1972: 154–56.

peace was rare in the Classical world. The fate of Sparta was similar. Because of the ferocious exclusivity of Spartan society and culture, Sparta never had more than ten thousand male citizens in any generation, and even though Spartan armies sometimes contained large levies of resident aliens (*perioikoi*) and even helots, the fact that Sparta could not replace the severe citizen losses suffered at the battle of Leuctra at the hands of Thebes in 371 led to the Spartans losing their hegemony over European Greece.²⁰

Here Rome was very different. It was the anxiety of the other Latin towns concerning the regrowth of Roman power in the mid-fourth century after the Celtic disaster that led to war between Rome and its Latin allies in 340–338. The Latin War ended in Roman victory, but the Romans' disposition of the defeated (and from the Roman point of view treacherous) Latins was the crucial step in the creation of an integrated territorial state in Latium.

Even before the Latin War the evidence suggests that the Roman government was experimenting with new forms of integrating non-Romans into the Roman state. In 381 Rome defeated Latin Tusculum and evidently dealt with the Tuscullans by extending Roman citizenship to them while leaving the city with internal autonomy. As Roman citizens, the Tuscullans owed service in the Roman army, as well as payment of the citizen war tax (*tributum*); yet Tusculum retained its separate identity and local self-government. This experiment in control mixed with inclusion and conciliation the Romans called a *municipium* (Cic. *Planc.* 19). We need not think of the outcome as particularly favorable to the defeated: the burdens of military service and the *tributum* will have been more conspicuous to the Tuscullans than any long-term benefits of Roman citizenship, and Tusculum sided with the Latins in the war of 340–338. But it seems a typical Roman attempt at political compromise.²¹

In the 380s the Roman state also created a sort of mutual citizenship with its informal ally the Etruscan city of Caere, on the coast north of Rome. Some later sources claimed that the Caeretans were the first non-Romans to be given *civitas sine suffragio*—Roman citizenship without the vote, part citizenship (on which see below). This has recently been

20. The perils of Greek exclusivity in terms of inability to recover from citizen losses in war: see Raaflaub 1991: 577. In the crisis after 413, the Athenians did hire large numbers of noncitizen rowers for the fleet; but hoplite losses were irreplaceable. On the intensifying Spartan dilemma after the mid-fifth century and then after 371, see esp. Forrest 1968: 131–35.

21. See Humbert 1978: 283–84; cf. Cornell 1995: 323–24.

doubted, but for our purposes the difference between the two ancient traditions is not large. What needs emphasis is that the people of Caere were Etruscans and did not even speak a language related to Latin—yet were somehow included with citizen rights in the Roman state. Similarly, we are told that in 340 the Senate gave full Roman citizenship to sixteen hundred Capuan aristocrats as a reward for help in the Latin War; these men, too, did not speak Latin (Livy 8.11.16). The idea of mutual citizenship with a non-Greek-speaking state, or granting citizenship en masse to non-Greek speakers, would have been inconceivable at Athens or in any other Greek city in this period.²²

These two political concepts—*municipium* and *civitas sine suffragio*—dominated the Roman decisions after the Latin War. The Senate punished the defeated Latin polities (some Latin states had sided with Rome, of course) by annexing parts of their land, and the existence of mutual links between Latin polities without Roman participation was now forbidden. But no Latin city was annihilated, no population sold into slavery as a result of defeat (as often happened in antiquity), nor was any special annual tribute or war indemnity imposed. The forgoing of brutal revenge meant that Rome would have available the fighting power of the Latin city-states—if they could be controlled and conciliated.²³ And to have access to that fighting power the Senate invented a new system of simultaneous control and conciliation. The basic principle of the solution the Romans arrived at is set forth by Livy (8.14); it is the divorce of citizen status from ethnicity or geographical location.

First, although three Latin polities retained their old status as independent allies of Rome, most Latin states, especially those previously hostile states near Rome itself, were given full Roman citizenship, and became locally autonomous Roman *municipia*. Livy even has some Volscian towns in the hills between Latium and Campania receiving Roman citizenship as part of the postwar settlement (8.14.5). Some scholars doubt that such an extension of full Roman citizenship en masse—striking enough in the cases in Latium—could have gone to non-Latin-speaking Volscians.²⁴ But the case of the Capuans in 340 argues against this (see above), and Cornell makes the effective reply: “It is only modern schol-

22. In favor of the Caeretans receiving *civitas sine suffragio* in the 380s: Sordi 1960: esp. 36–49; Harris 1971: 45–47. Against, but accepting mutual citizenship: Humbert 1978: 29–32; Cornell 1995: 320. The 1,600 Campanian aristocrats: Humbert 1978: 172–76; cf. Frederickson 1984: 191–92.

23. See Adcock 1928: 591.

24. So Salmon 1969: 46–47; Sherwin-White 1973: 205 and 212.

arship, not Roman policy, that has discriminated between communities on the grounds of race and language.”²⁵

Second, non-Latin polities farther away from Rome, although punished by confiscation of land, now became locally autonomous *municipia* of Roman citizens without the vote, but with important civil rights (including *commercium*, *conubium*, and *migratio*). Livy lists three outlying Volscian towns and four cities in Campania as having received this status of *civitas sine suffragio*. A large new legal category of citizens was thus created. Again, *civitas sine suffragio* should not be idealized: the burdens of half-citizenship—army service and the war tax—were substantial. Hence later (89 B.C.) the Italiote Greek cities of Naples and Heraclaea debated whether to accept these heavy burdens rather than keep their formal treaties of alliance, even when they were being directly offered full citizenship by the Senate.²⁶ Yet *civitas sine suffragio*, with all its limitations, did provide an opening for long-term benefits and inclusion. The same was true of the new Roman application of *civitas sine suffragio* to the “Latin colonies.” From the 490s Rome and the Latin states had periodically established jointly populated Latin colonies, fortress towns with surrounding farmland, to guard the strategic approaches to Latium. Now the founding of these large colonies would be determined by Rome alone, but their composition would be a mix of full Roman citizens (themselves now a mix, including many Latins) who would become citizens without the vote in exchange for substantial allotments of free land, and who would be combined with citizens from elsewhere who already had *sine suffragio* status. Thus further expansion of the Roman state would be an enterprise still shared by Latium as a whole (plus other new citizens, and citizens without the vote). The new-style *colonia Latina* shows how the Senate from 338 was establishing a hierarchy based merely on juridical status, not ethnicity, within the increased territory under Roman control. This, in turn, meant that the self-identity of the Romans itself not only was flexible as a concept but was changing. Hence the terms “Roman” and “Latin” were gradually but increasingly divorced from actual ethnicity or original location.²⁷

Beyond the Roman citizens of various sorts were the allies of the Roman people—the *socii populi Romani*. These were usually Italic peoples at a significant distance from Rome whom the Romans had defeated,

25. Cornell 1995: 349.

26. See Cic. *Pro Balbo* 21, with Sartori 1978: 90–91.

27. See Salmon 1969: chap. III; Galsterer 1976: 41–64.

and for whom a formal treaty of alliance with Rome as a separate political entity (i.e., not inclusion within the Roman state as Roman citizens of one kind or another) was part of the settlement of the war. These foreign but allied polities were subjected to Rome in that, by treaty, Rome controlled their external relations. But the burdens placed on the allies were mild when compared to the burdens imposed by other ancient hegemonies. The allies of Rome kept their own laws and local autonomy, paid no taxes to Rome, and had no Roman garrisons or political overseers imposed upon them. By comparison, the polities allied with Athens (for instance) experienced all these varieties of oppressive conduct from the Athenians.²⁸ The primary duty of the allies of Rome was service in their own separate military units with the Roman army when the Romans took the field. The emphasis on direct military service as the primary duty of the allies is another indication of the depth of Roman concern about security—an expression of the Roman desire to possess both a buffer zone around the metropole and a reserve of manpower.

Yet Roman citizenship was also gradually opened up to the Italic allies. In allied polities we find the local aristocracy frequently becoming Roman citizens—usually *sine suffragio*, but from this status promotion to full citizenship was only a step. And it may be that the allies shared in the founding of the large Latin *coloniae*.²⁹ Sometimes whole peoples would be enfranchised as a reward for loyalty: the lowland Sabines in 268 B.C.; the upland Sabines in 241.³⁰ But mass enfranchisements were rare; what occurred was mostly at the individual level. Yet once the terms “Roman” and “Latin” came to refer to juridical status rather than to actual ethnicity or location, the terms were infinitely extendable geographically.³¹

As a result of the reorganization of the 330s, Rome became a very large city-state in terms of territory—though not nearly as large yet in territory as Carthage.³² Even more important, Rome became the largest city-state in the ancient world in terms of citizen population. Including the polities that possessed *civitas sine suffragio*, the territory of Rome after the Latin War (that is, the region now inhabited by Roman citizens of various differing kinds) now covered more than five thousand square

28. For the comparison of Roman treatment of subordinate allied states with the harsher habits of classical Greek cities, see Strauss 1997: 128–29.

29. See Cornell 1995: 367.

30. Discussion: Dench 1995: 15 and n. 49.

31. Cf. Strauss 1997: 129.

32. On the vast North African territorial holdings of the Carthaginian city-state, see above, chap. 5, text at n. 188.

miles—compared to the sixteen hundred square miles of Attica. By 300 B.C. the adult male citizen population of the Roman state numbered well over two hundred thousand—compared to the sixty thousand male citizens of fifth-century Athens. No doubt the generation that fought against Rome in the war of 340–338 was not happy with this outcome; they preferred independence. And fear was certainly an important factor restraining the behavior of the discontented: the Romans had not hesitated to execute ringleaders of resistance (as at Velitrae); everyone will have been aware that further defeat could lead to large land confiscations and its conversion into Roman *ager publicus* (as had happened, for instance, at Veii); and after the 330s the imbalance of power between Rome and any individual subordinate state was daunting—far stronger in favor of the metropole than the balance of power had been between (say) Athens and her allies. These facts of power made a powerful difference in the stability of the Roman hegemony that was coming into being.³³ To some extent the postwar Roman transformation of the concept of citizenship can even be viewed as a stern example of engulfing Roman imperialism.³⁴

Over time, however, the Latins and the others became reconciled to the situation. Loyalty to Rome came from fear, but not simply from fear. To polities north of Rome, the Republic appeared as a champion against the fearsome Celts.³⁵ And an example of the more positive side of amalgamation is the success of men from the *municipia*. L. Fulvius Curvus was elected consul in 322: either he or his father had led Tusculum against Rome in the war of 340–338 (Pliny *NH* 7.136). Fulvius Curvus won a victory over the Samnites and was awarded a triumph by the Senate; his son was elected consul in 305; and the Fulvii would long hold a politically prominent place at Rome. Also from Tusculum was Ti. Coruncanius: as consul in 280 he won a triumph, and—though this was only two generations after the Latin War—he was later elected *pontifex maximus*, head of the Roman state religion. Also from Tusculum was C. Fabricius Luscinus: elected consul in 282 (when he won a triumph), again in 278,

33. The difference in power after 338 between Rome and any individual subordinate state is rightly emphasized by Strauss (1997: 128–29), as is the difference between the Roman situation in general and the more balanced situation of power between Athens and its subordinate states. Note that especially because of the crisis caused by the Gallic attack of ca. 390, it is possible that many Veian landholders in fact retained their land: see above, chap. 5, text at n. 31.

34. So Oakley 1993: 32–33.

35. See Livy 10.10.12; cf. Badian 1958: 31 and n. 2.

and then censor in 275 (i.e., he became moral discipliner of the Roman state). M'. Curius Dentatus—consul three times in 290–274 and the greatest Roman general of his age, victor over Pyrrhus—was in origin a *municipalis*.³⁶ Many other cases could be cited, and Friedrich Münzer is surely correct that the leading statesmen of the old Roman elite (itself now a mix of patricians and plebeians) must have played a crucial role in encouraging prominent and talented men from Latium and farther afield to seek their political fortunes in Rome itself.³⁷ Thus the settlement of 338 resulted in the annexation of the Latins and others by the Roman state, but it was annexation that brought with it not merely the heavy burdens and duties of Roman citizenship—warlike burdens and duties that the Latins and others were of course already used to carrying on their own—but also the rights of Roman citizenship and, for some, the highest privileges and honors Rome provided.³⁸

The intense particularism of the Greek poleis and the jealousy with which they guarded citizenship made even the gradual inclusion of subjects as equals (or almost equals) almost impossible—even individually, let alone en masse. Athens never gave any of its subject allies citizenship rights, while it imposed taxation, garrisons, and political overseers, and interfered with the politics and constitutions of the allied states at will.³⁹ The efficient use of asymmetrical power requires both stern force and skillful diplomacy; it requires both propaganda and self-restraint. But the culture of most Classical city-states (and here we should include Tarentum and Carthage, Rome's western rivals), often encouraging self-aggrandizement without regard to the needs of others, "was not a good school of the art of alliance management."⁴⁰ It was precisely in these skills, however, that the Romans of the 330s and later excelled. If the balance of military power between Rome and any individual polity in central Italy was eventually far more weighted in the Romans' favor than any balance of power between Athens and even her most powerful subjects, the Romans' inducements to cooperation were also—and simultaneously—far more extensive. It was a powerful combination.⁴¹

But integration on a wide scale is the main point. The key to Roman

36. On the Fulvii, Coruncanii, Fabricii, and Curius, see Münzer 1920: 61–62 and 64–65 (with sources).

37. This is the theme of Münzer 1920: chap. 2.

38. See Adcock 1928: 591.

39. On the administration of the Athenian empire, and Athenian instrumentalities of control, see Meiggs 1972: chaps. 11–13.

40. Strauss 1997: 128–29.

41. Ibid. 137–39.

strength and resilience in the ferocious competition among states for survival and power in the ancient Mediterranean lay not merely in the fact that the Romans were militaristic, bellicose, and diplomatically aggressive. These were the characteristics of every major and second-rank polity in the Mediterranean world, and even many minor ones, so it is unlikely that a focus merely on these characteristics will take us far in explaining Rome's extraordinary success. Theodor Mommsen long ago found the source of Rome's exceptional power approximately where I am suggesting: he argued that the Romans came the closest among great ancient Mediterranean polities to creating a unified nation-state.⁴² It is true that by the time of Cato the Elder (ca. 170 B.C.) Romans could conceive of Italy and Rome as a collective but unified entity, with the Romans and the other Italian peoples having a shared history; this is evident from Cato's famous history of Italy, the *Origines*.⁴³ But the Roman development of an idea of citizenship divorced from ethnicity and/or geographical location went beyond the nation-state; and if Roman rule in Italy had not been something different from a nation-state, the Romans would not have been able in due course to take the process of integration that they had invented much further, to include eventually regions far beyond Italy itself. Yet Mommsen was profoundly right to emphasize the exceptionalism of the Roman achievement in that Rome succeeded in creating a large and well-integrated polity, at first in central Italy and then in most of Italy. This gave Rome the exceptional advantages in scale of resources, and in control over those resources, that any large integrated state would have in competition against large but fragile dynastic empires, or against small and hence limited city-states or mere tribal groupings. It was from those exceptional advantages—along with militarism, bellicosity, and diplomatic assertiveness—that hegemony emerged.⁴⁴

ROMAN NONEXCEPTIONALISM: THE DECISION OF 200 B.C. TO INTERVENE IN THE GREEK EAST

This brings us to the crucial decision at Rome in 200 B.C. to intervene strongly in the Greek East. In the analysis that follows, the “layered” approach discussed above in chapter 3 is adopted. That is, due consideration is given to unit attributes: to the militarized nature of Roman soci-

42. Mommsen 1903: 412–30, esp. 428–30; cf. 451–52.

43. See Williams 2001: 95–98.

44. On the inherent advantages of large and well-integrated states (in our age, nation states) in competition against these other forms of states, see Doyle 1986: 34–47.

ety, to the grim past experience of the decision-making elite and the political influence of that elite, and indeed even to the actions of individual politicians—especially P. Sulpicius Galba, one of the consuls of 200 B.C. But due consideration is also given to the impact of the geopolitical environment: the power-transition crisis occurring in the eastern Mediterranean and its dislocating and transforming impact (i.e., the collapse of the Ptolemaic regime and the subsequent increase in the power of Macedonia and Syria under their vigorous and warlike monarchs); the reaction to this power-transition crisis by Greek states whose security was gravely threatened (i.e., their appeal to Rome for help); and all this within the general context of a multipolar, heavily militarized Mediterranean anarchy. Here the aggressive, security-conscious behavior of all states was in great part the result of the pressures generated upon them by the anarchic system: the fears, the suspicions, the real threats, the objective clashes of interest, in a world where there was little international law and little means to enforce what law existed—where the rigors of the self-help regime ruled.

It has been much debated recently whether the Realist paradigm of an anarchic interstate structure in which fierce rivalry for resources, power, and security is the normal behavior of states is an accurate depiction of the modern international world.⁴⁵ What this study of the ancient Mediterranean has shown again and again, however—in the chapters on the Classical and the Hellenistic Greek states, on Rome's rivals for power in the West, and on Roman militarism within the anarchic environment—is that interstate relations in the ancient world conform to the grimmest of Realist concepts. The system consistently pushed states of all sizes and all political types in certain aggressive directions, which in turn set off synergistic reactions by other states, and all within a cruel general environment where the punishment for weakness was savage. One cannot understand either the character of Roman society as it had developed by the Middle Republic or the origins of Roman success within its harsh interstate environment unless these factors are taken into serious account.

The state-system of the ancient Mediterranean is thus a classic illustration of the Waltzian maxim that militarized anarchy forces all states toward functional similarity.⁴⁶ But an additional factor intensified the Hobbesian environment in which Rome existed, and it came strongly into play in 201–200. As noted in chapter 3 above, Stephen van Evera stresses

45. See above, chap. 2, text at n. 67.

46. *Contra*, e.g., Veyne 1975: 795—who sees Rome as unique in its imperialist stance among the Hellenistic states.

that though the modern system of states is anarchic, the destruction of states within it is unusual, and he suggests that this is a consequence of the strengths of the modern nation-state.⁴⁷ Given the recent fate of Yugoslavia, one may have doubts about this even with regard to Europe; and certainly if we look at the modern Third World, we see a multiplicity of fragile states, often falling apart internally, that have suffered invasion, loss of autonomy, and/or dismemberment.⁴⁸ It would appear from our study above in chapters 3, 4, and 5 that in terms of the fragility of states, the ancient Mediterranean was in all periods closer to the modern Third World. In antiquity there were no nation-states—though Rome comes closest in some respects—and leaving aside the often grim fates of smaller states in Classical Greece,⁴⁹ the instability of the basic security of even the most powerful states in the Hellenistic age is extraordinary. Carthage went from being an imperial power to the point of physical annihilation at the hands of its own mercenary troops between 245 and 240 B.C. Rome in the 230s and 220s might have disappeared under a tidal wave of Celtic invasion (that was Polybius's opinion: 2.35)—as had almost occurred in 390. And of course the Roman system in Italy came close to collapse under the successive blows inflicted by Hannibal between 218 and 216.⁵⁰

The events that led to Rome's permanent involvement in eastern Mediterranean geopolitics had to do with a similar situation of Hellenistic fragility of power: between 207 and 200 B.C. the Ptolemaic empire went from being one of the three dominating states of the Greek East to being on the verge of destruction. The regime was faced with a child on the throne, a succession of highly unstable regencies for him in the capital at Alexandria (replaced by coup or riot), a massive indigenous rebellion in Upper and Middle Egypt, and all this was eventually combined with severe external attack against the empire and perhaps Egypt itself from Philip V of Macedon and Antiochus III of Syria.⁵¹

The result was that the basic triadic balance of power that had existed in the eastern Mediterranean since about 280 and that had constituted the foundation of the multipolar interstate system in the East for

47. Van Evera 1998: 41–45; cf. Waltz 1979: 95.

48. See the grim set of essays in Neuman 1998, and the comments of Waltz 2000: 37, on these findings.

49. Above, chap. 3, text at n. 72, for a list of destruction.

50. See Lazenby 1996: 43–47; cf. now Hoyos 2003: 122–33.

51. The elements in the Ptolemaic crisis and its dislocating impact upon the Mediterranean state-system have been introduced to readers above, chap. 4, text at n. 92.

eighty years was now suddenly foundering. The main structural function that the Ptolemaic kingdom had performed within this multipolar Hellenistic state-system with its triadic balance of power was the containment of the Seleucids, and less directly the containment of the Antigonids—but it could no longer fulfill that crucial function. As the distribution of power across the Hellenistic state-system suddenly and radically changed after 207 and especially after 204, the system began to undergo what political scientists term a power-transition crisis. The enormous impact of the aggressive actions of Philip and Antiochus, unleashed in this power-transition crisis caused by the collapse of Egypt, is shown by the fact that the Republic of Rhodes and the Kingdom of Pergamum—two bitter rivals for power and influence on the west coast of Asia Minor—were driven by summer 201 to cooperate with each other militarily against Philip, and then to send embassies together to Rome asking for help that autumn. It is especially striking that the Rhodian government, which had harshly opposed Roman involvement in Greece as recently as 207 (see Polyb. 11.4–6), now completely reversed its stance toward Rome, and took the lead in pleading for Roman intervention; and that Athens, which had for a generation pursued a policy of strict neutrality with all the great powers, was also now driven to appeal to Rome. Indeed, between 209 and 207 Athens and the Ptolemies had joined with Rhodes itself in seeking to end the first Roman war with Macedon in a manner that was not necessarily conducive to Roman interests.⁵² The actions of all these states therefore constituted a true diplomatic revolution in the Greek East, and underline the fact that while the collapse of the Ptolemies was the crucial aspect of the power-transition crisis, the other main element in it was the fearsome rise in power of Philip V and Antiochus III. Even before 207 the two kings were the most formidable, successful, famed, and feared Macedonian monarchs since Philip II and Alexander; but with the sudden collapse of the Ptolemies their unbri-dled power reached an apogee. This led Greek states, even states that had previously been wary of the Romans—desperate now to find a way to balance the power of Philip and Antiochus—to send embassies to Rome, warning of the situation in the East and appealing for Roman intervention.⁵³

The Romans decided to answer the pleas and warnings from the Greek

52. Detailed discussion in Eckstein 2002.

53. On the startling reversals of the policies of Athens, Rhodes, and Pergamum by summer/autumn 201, see above, chap. 4, text at nn. 97 and 112, and cf. Eckstein 2005: 232.

states in the affirmative, and to intervene in the eastern Mediterranean—diplomatically at first, and then militarily. As with the true nature of Roman exceptionalism (see above), the true nature of the power-transition crisis in the East and its connection to the Roman decision of 200 was rightly emphasized long ago by Theodor Mommsen: he saw Rome as responding primarily to a very precipitous shift in the balance of power among the great Greek states, caused by the faltering of the Egyptian regime. And as with the true nature of Roman exceptionalism, it is time to reemphasize the truth of Mommsen's insight.⁵⁴ Yet the amount of information we possess on the Roman decision of 201–200 also allows us to adopt a “layered” approach in our analysis, following Thucydides, the founder of international-systems theory—an approach combining international systems theory with aspects of Rome's internal (unit) culture, and even the impact of individuals. As I think has been demonstrated previously, there is no contradiction in foregrounding the impact of the pressures of the state-system while adopting such a “layered” approach.⁵⁵

The background interstate structure is clear. Rome had survived—at times barely survived—in a highly militarized multipolar anarchy partly because it developed a militarized, militaristic, bellicose, and diplomatically aggressive unit culture. It could not have survived otherwise: “States must meet the needs of the political ecosystem or court annihilation.”⁵⁶ Veyne is certainly correct to say that the attitude of Rome toward the outside world was both consciously and unconsciously aggressive, and constituted, in its search for control, an “imperialism of routine.”⁵⁷ But the demands of the political ecosystem help explain why this imperialism of routine, and all the cultural and elements constituting it—militarism, bellicosity, and assertive diplomacy—were characteristic not just of the Roman Republic but of all important polities in the ancient Mediterranean (and of many less powerful states as well). And once such militarized and militaristic and diplomatically assertive cultures were in place, they played their own important destructive role in the state interactions that resulted.

Even the strictest of international-systems theorists accept that not only the general type of interstate structure (i.e., anarchy) and the specific system within which states exist (i.e., militarized multipolarity) but also the

54. Mommsen 1903: 696–701; cf. Raditsa 1972: 564–65.

55. On the validity of the Thucydidean approach, see above, chap. 3.

56. Sterling 1974: 336.

57. Veyne 1975: 794 and 805.

internal characteristics and cultures of states have a significant impact on state conduct.⁵⁸ Yet it is equally true that the focus of the theorists is on the general environment—that is, it is essentially sociological—whereas in terms of any individual geopolitical event, Richard Ned Lebow has rightly stressed something else: that all the underlying structural, systemic, and unit-cultural factors favoring a certain kind of action and outcome might well be present in a given situation, but absent a specific catalyst of action the outcome may still not occur. An anarchic interstate structure, a heavily militarized multipolar state system, and a militaristic and aggressive unit culture are all important, but in themselves may not be enough to complete a causal analysis explaining major actions. And specifically regarding decisions to go to war, Lebow argues, one should distinguish between “situations in which actors are actively looking for an excuse for war, and those in which the catalyst reshapes the way they think about the situation, making them more willing than they were previously to consider high-risk options because of the greater perceived costs of inaction.”⁵⁹ This perspective is useful in examining the crucial Roman decision of 200 B.C. The question is whether the Roman Senate was actively looking in that year for an excuse for going to war: war in the Greek East against the great Hellenistic powers, or war anywhere.

The answer from some modern scholars, of course, is that Rome in the third century B.C. was a Schumpeterian war machine that depended on continual warfare to maintain the prosperity of all the sociopolitical elements that made up the machine: the warmongering aristocracy, imbued with a warrior ethos and dependent upon warfare to maintain its social prestige and its wealth; the needy *populus*, eager to enrich their difficult lives with loot and land; the war-focused alliance of the allies of the Roman people. From this perspective—the *Primat der Innenpolitik*—the new war of 200 in the eastern Mediterranean finds its explanation essentially from Roman internal socioeconomic-political structure and history. The events in the East simply provided an opportunity, or even merely an excuse, for the expression of Roman militarism and expansionism.⁶⁰

If one examines the specific situation confronting the Roman Republic in 200 B.C., however, such a reconstruction is not very plausible. In that year Rome had just emerged victorious, but at enormous cost, over

58. See, e.g., Waltz 2000: 24.

59. Lebow 2001: 614.

60. For this version of the decision of 200, see de Sanctis 1923: 24–25; Veyne 1975: 838–39; Harris 1979: 212–18; Mandell 1989.

Hannibal and Carthage in the Second Punic War—a life-and-death struggle that had left the state and its people exhausted. The general scale of Livy’s census figures suggests that the Roman people had lost almost half its male citizenry since the mid-220s, and the Senate itself certainly suffered severe losses, especially in the early years of fighting; the low number of citizens by 209 reveals, as the epitomator of Livy sadly says, “how many men the unfavorable outcome of so many battles had carried off from the Roman people.”⁶¹ Hannibal evidently boasted that he had destroyed four hundred Italian towns and killed three hundred thousand Italians (App. *Pun.* 134); the scale is astounding, but defining “town” broadly and including civilian populations, it may not be an exaggeration.⁶² The Romans themselves had of course contributed to the prevalence of destruction in Italy, retaliating against polities that went over to Carthage. Our sources give the impression that by about 200 all of Italy was devastated; certainly significant regions were, especially in the south, and in 200 much good farmland was for sale (Livy 31.13.6).⁶³ Meanwhile the Roman Senate was, as usual, divided by faction and jealousies; hence fear of being superseded by a rival if he engaged in a long siege of Carthage was one of the reasons P. Cornelius Scipio dictated a relatively moderate peace to Carthage after the victory at Zama, and then forced it through the Senate.⁶⁴ A fair proportion of the allies had deserted to Hannibal in his years of victory, and had then been punished by Roman armies scraped together to deal with the crisis; such polities will not have been eager or ready for a new major war. And the same holds true even for the loyal allies, who had suffered seriously in the long, grim struggle with Carthage.⁶⁵

Moreover, there was serious new trouble brewing on the Celtic frontier of Italy in this period, and some men may have feared that another Celtic invasion from the north was coming. After fifteen years of (relative) peace on the Po Valley frontier since 216, large-scale Celtic raiding and a severe Roman defeat at the hands of the Boii occurred near Arim-

61. Livy has the census of 263 B.C. with some 380,000 male Roman citizens (*Per.* 16); by the end of the first war with Carthage in 241 the number had sunk to some 270,000 citizens (*Per.* 19), and it was about the same just before the second war (*Per.* 20). But by 209 Livy gives only some 137,000 citizens (*Per.* 27). The quote: *Per.* 27. In 201 the figures were substantially higher (219,000: *Per.* 29), but still far below the figures for either twenty or sixty years previously. The precise numbers cannot be trusted, but the trend is clear.

62. See Cornell 1996: 103 and n. 22.

63. *Ibid.* 103–11; cf. also Hopkins 1978: 1–56.

64. Detailed discussion in Eckstein 1987: chap. VIII.

65. Serious defections among the allies during the Hannibalic War: Lazenby 1996: 44–45. The condition of the allies ca. 200: Cornell 1996: 103 and 107.

inum in summer 201. The next summer (200) witnessed a massive Celtic attack on the two large Roman colonies in the central Po: Placentia was actually overrun and sacked; Cremona came under serious siege. There had been no warfare on the scale of 201–200 in the Po Valley for a decade and a half—and severe fighting there was going to continue for another decade.⁶⁶ It is often argued that the consuls of each year were eager for warfare, in order to establish their personal glory; but it is clear that in winter 201/200 a war in the Greek East was not necessary to achieve such a goal. The new Celtic crisis in northern Italy—the waging of war against Rome's most traditional enemies—would have served quite well enough.⁶⁷

Finally, it appears that the recruiting of an army for the East in spring and summer 200 put a severe strain on the available Roman military manpower. The *populus* was very reluctant to authorize an eastern intervention precisely because they were exhausted by war (Livy 31.6.3–6: discussed below). Even after a war vote was reluctantly passed by the assembly, a special dispensation was also voted, exempting from the new draft all veterans who had served with P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus (Livy 31.8.6). Yet even so, there was a mutiny among embittered long-serving veterans in the eastern army in 199 (32.3.2–7). Kostas Bruselus thus makes a fair argument that while the late departure of the consul P. Sulpicius Galba for the East (he arrived in Illyria only in early autumn 200) was in part caused by his duty to fulfill religious obligations that had emerged during the summer in Italy (see below), it was also caused in part by the sheer difficulty in holding the conscription.⁶⁸

One fundamental change in the balance of power in the western Mediterranean at the system level did, however, facilitate Roman intervention against the great Greek kings: the disappearance of Carthage as a powerful rival to Rome in the West. The end of the Hannibalic War left Carthage with no overseas possessions, no army, and a risible fleet.⁶⁹ Conversely, the Roman victory left the Republic without any major and organized polity capable of acting as a counterweight against it in the western Mediterranean, and hence left Rome with a larger option to

66. For detailed discussion of the Celtic threat in 201 and 200 B.C., see Eckstein 1987: 54–58.

67. Senatorial fears in this period of a new Celtic invasion of central Italy: see Zon. 8.16 with Eckstein 1987: 63–67. On general Roman fears that the Celts would someday still take the city: Williams 2000: 170–82 (with plentiful evidence).

68. Bruselus 1996: 155 n. 21.

69. On the terms of the peace of 201, see Schmitt 1969: no. 548.

project its power into the East than would have been the case had the Republic still been encumbered in 201–200 with Carthage a significant and worrisome counterweight.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the new freedom of action that the absence of Punic power meant to Rome appears to have been more than balanced, at least in the immediate aftermath of the Roman victory, by Roman exhaustion.

Even with all these pressures, if Rome had been long and deeply involved in the geopolitics of the Greek East before 201–200 B.C. then the decision of 200 B.C. to intervene in the power-transition crisis that was occurring there might still appear a natural development: an inherent consequence of the increase in Roman power, combined with the increasingly broad security goals that went with increasing power, combined with long-term Roman interests in the East. The extent of Roman involvement in the East before 201–200 is, however, a highly contentious question. I think the evidence suggests overall that before 201–200 Roman involvement in Greek geopolitics had been minimal. On the other hand, given the bitter Roman experience of Greek and Macedonian monarchs' ambitions, the existence of Roman concern for security threats arising from the East seems a reasonable proposition. The first factor serves to deepen the conundrum surrounding the Roman decision of 200; the second helps explain it, though certainly not fully.⁷¹

It was in 229 B.C. that Roman forces intervened for the first time east of the Adriatic, when a large fleet and army was sent to discipline the aggressively expanding pirate dynasts in Illyria. A second large military intervention occurred in Illyria again in 219, against a similar situation. Some scholars argue that Rome took "almost the first opportunity" to intervene in this region once Roman acquisitions from the First Punic War had been put in order; the image is of a steady and relentless imperial expansion, one conscious step at a time.⁷² But Polybius indicates in both cases that the Roman interventions in Illyria were both tardy (in

70. That is: Rome could benefit in early 200 from a redistribution of power capabilities across the system, just as from the late 230s Carthage had benefited at Rome's expense from the redistribution of power against Rome that had been occurring then (see above, chap. 5). A parallel: the United States in recent years has enjoyed increased freedom of international action because of the absence since 1991 of the Soviet Union as a counterweight; see Waltz 2000: 24.

71. In delineating the overall lack of Roman interest in the Greek East down to 200 B.C., I agree in general with the classic analysis of Holleaux 1935. But in view of the trends in the last twenty years toward analyzing Rome as an exceptional aggressor, the whole topic needs a detailed monographic reexamination. Here one can only summarize the issues.

72. See Harris 1979: 197.

terms of complaints the Senate received) and reluctant.⁷³ Modern scholars also have posited that the Roman interventions led to a territorially organized Roman protectorate in Illyria, probably containing allies sternly bound to Rome by sworn treaties.⁷⁴ The evidence suggests instead that in Illyria after 229/228 there were merely several states that had become informal friends (*amici*) of the Republic, separated by dozens or even hundreds of miles from each other; and even after 219 Rome had at most a zone of informal influence among a few geographically discontinuous Greek city-states on the upper Adriatic coast and among a few inland tribes. The poleis involved may well have feared Roman power; but they also hoped it would serve to balance the Illyrian naval and overland raiding that continuously threatened their independence and even existence.⁷⁵ The main political problem faced by these small polities was in fact not Roman oppression but Roman indifference to their troubles with the Illyrians: Rome withdrew its forces back to Italy after 229 and again after 219; there was (naturally) no continuous Roman diplomatic presence in Illyria; and the Senate created no sworn alliances with anyone.⁷⁶ In terms of Rome's relationship with the Greek world in general, one must also remember that Illyria was in any case an isolated region far across the mountains from the main theater of politics in European Greece, which faced the Aegean.⁷⁷

Conflict then broke out between Rome and Philip V of Macedon starting in 217/216, with overt war declared in 214—a much more important step. But Philip, not Rome, was the aggressor. From late 217 onward the king sought to take advantage of the disasters dealt Rome by Hannibal's invasion of Italy, focusing his efforts on seizing Illyria—where Macedonian power had never previously reached. After the Roman military catastrophe at Cannae in 216, Philip also swore a formal treaty of alliance with Hannibal (215). He believed, as many did at that point, that Carthage would win the war; and he was making diplomatic adjustments accordingly.⁷⁸ Perhaps he even thought of invading Italy, from cities on

73. Senatorial indifference in the 230s: Polyb. 2.8.3 (explicit). The second intervention came long after the aggressions of the Illyrian dynast Demetrius of Pharos began: see Polyb. 3.16.2–4, with Eckstein 1994: 46–59.

74. See, e.g., Hammond 1989; Derow 1991; Adams 1993: 44; Heftner 1997: 186, cf. 137; Habicht 1997: 185, cf. 189 and 194.

75. See Polyb. 2.11.5 (explicitly), with Petzold 1971: 215–16.

76. Informal (not treaty-bound) relationships between Rome and the Illyrian polities: see Eckstein 1999, esp. against Derow 1991.

77. On the geography, see Dell 1973.

78. See Adams 1993: esp. 48–50. The parallel with Syracuse (and Syracusan ambitions at Roman expense) after Cannae is clear: see Eckstein 1987: chap. V.

the Adriatic, coming to liberate the Italiote polities as a second Pyrrhus—the king of Epirus in northwestern Greece who had come to Italy as a champion of Tarentum in 280–275, and whose formidable army had gotten within a few days' march of Rome itself.⁷⁹ An invasion of Italy by Philip sounds far-fetched to us, but Philip saw himself as the heir of Alexander the Great, and he was famed for taking military gambles; the evidence that the Roman government took seriously the idea that Philip might repeat Pyrrhus's performance is shown by the measures they instigated strongly reinforcing Roman naval forces in the Adriatic Sea.⁸⁰ In 211 Roman envoys also negotiated an alliance against Philip with the Aetolian League. The Aetolians were long-standing rivals of Macedon and in 220–217 had initiated and then lost a large-scale war against Philip and his allies in European Greece (the Hellenic Symmarchy); they had hoped to expand their own power, wrongly believing that Philip in 220 was too young and inexperienced to defend Macedonian interests. The new Roman war alliance with Aetolia, which also led to war alliances between Rome and several Greek states that were friendly with the Aetolians, was essentially a renewal of that earlier war.⁸¹

Roman aims in the Aetolian alliance and what moderns call the First Macedonian War were limited to keeping Philip fighting in Greece, and thus away from Italy while Hannibal was still a severe threat there. During this war Rome did gain contacts with states friendly with Aetolia (especially with the Kingdom of Pergamum, which shared with Aetolia a bitter enmity toward Macedon). Such contacts were a natural by-product of the war Philip had started with Rome, but certainly not its goal.⁸² The terms of the Roman alliance with Aetolia, known from ancient historical writers and from an important inscription found in 1949, show that Rome also hoped to benefit financially, via loot seized from Philip and his allies—booty that would no doubt help finance the ongoing war against Carthage. But all territorial conquests were to go to Aetolia; this

79. On Pyrrhus's invasion of Italy and his impact upon Roman views of the security threats that might exist in the Greek East, see above, chap. 5.

80. Philip's reputation as a military gambler: see rightly Rich 1984: 129–30, in discussing the Roman concern over an invasion. Philip as heir of Alexander: see Walbank 1993. The Roman naval arrangements to protect the east coast of Italy show that the Senate took the threat of a Macedonian invasion seriously, even if modern scholars do not: Siebert 1995: 237–48. Roman fear of Philip: Polyb. 5.105.8. Denied by Harris 1979: 205–7.

81. The Aetolian role in provoking the Social War of 220–217 in Greece: Scholten 2000: chap. 6. The strategic background to the Roman-Aetolian alliance of 211 B.C.: see now Eckstein 2002: 270–73.

82. Despite Harris 1979: 207; Rich 1984: 130 and 150–51. See rightly Errington 1989: 99; cf. Eckstein 2002: 271–72.

shows the absence of any Roman ambitions to increase Rome's sphere of influence beyond Illyria. These limited Roman war aims also explain why, once Philip had his hands full with the war in Greece, the war effort from the Roman side was poorly sustained: the Senate kept Roman military resources to a minimum, and eventually withdrew all field forces from the Greek theater. In fact, by 207 the *Patres* had in essence abandoned the Aetolians, and the league was forced in 206 to swear a disadvantageous peace with a victorious Philip—its second defeat at his hands. A year later (205) the Romans themselves came to a compromise peace with the king, in which Philip got to keep some of his conquests in Illyria.⁸³ There is no reason to think that the Peace of Phoenice was insincere on either side (i.e., that either side viewed it as a mere truce in an ongoing longer-range conflict), and the proof is that after the swearing of the peace the Romans withdrew all their forces back across the Adriatic, not just from Greece proper but also from Illyria itself.⁸⁴

The above discussion suggests how unlikely it is that the Roman decision-making elite was looking actively for a new war in the Greek East in winter 201/200. This is not because the Senate was unwilling to take action to increase Rome's power and influence, including east of the Adriatic. To increase Roman power and influence was its general stance, "the imperialism of routine"—an attitude common to all Hellenistic states. Rather, Rome was originally indifferent to the dramatic events in the eastern Mediterranean in 202 and 201 because the Republic was exhausted by the long and terrible war just concluded with Hannibal and Carthage, and because Roman overall interest in the eastern Mediterranean, and Roman concrete interests there, were to this point minimal.⁸⁵ Indeed, the *Patres* were still so uninformed in these years even about the geography of European Greece that in winter 198/197 they needed a basic geography lesson (see Polyb. 18.11.3–11). The one thing the Senate did understand, however—and it was important information—was that

83. On the circumstances of the peace between Philip and Aetolia in 206 and then between Philip and Rome in 205, see Eckstein 2002: 291–95.

84. See the analysis, still valuable, of Holleaux 1935: 286–97. Warrior 1996 accepts almost the entire Roman tradition that there were Roman envoys in Greece from 203 observing events, and three Roman warships off the Adriatic coast (Livy 30.26.2–4). Even if one accepts this—and many scholars are dubious, since this same passage not only accuses Philip of suspiciously vague violations of the Peace of Phoenice, but also retails provably false Roman propaganda that Philip supplied troops to Hannibal in Africa (30.26.4; cf. 30.33.5)—these Roman actions do not amount to much.

85. Contrast Harris (1979: 217), who presents what he calls Rome's "intrusion" into Greek affairs in 200 as the inevitable and conscious step, after victory over Carthage, in the implacable Roman advance (cf. on Illyria: text above at n. 72).

serious threats to the security of Italy could, under certain circumstances, arise from the powerful monarchical states that existed beyond the Adriatic. This had already occurred now twice: first with Pyrrhus of Epirus (280–275) and then with Philip V (217–205).

Nevertheless, to employ Lebow's terminology, a catalyst was necessary to produce the historical outcome of 200. Without it, Rome was most unlikely to have involved itself in the politics of the eastern Mediterranean immediately after the Second Punic War—or at any time in the near future—because the course of Greek geopolitics was simply not yet central enough to the thinking of the Senate.⁸⁶ Given the disorganized internal structure of the Roman Senate, an institution of about three hundred men with multiple groups, factions, families, and personalities in constant and fluid interaction with each other, it was in fact natural that it tended to avoid thinking about all long-range problems. This included the problem in the East caused by the collapse of Ptolemaic Egypt. As a group the *Patres* could be quite efficient in a crisis, but in general they tended just to muddle through.⁸⁷

Moreover, throughout 201 the attention of most senators would have been focused anywhere but on the East. In the spring there was the long and acrimonious debate over the peace terms that P. Cornelius Scipio had proposed for ending the war with Carthage, for many senators felt them too mild; into the summer there was the complex process of peace-making itself, in which a continuous political uproar was caused by the attempts to block peace by the consul Cn. Cornelius Lentulus. In the summer, too, a serious emergency developed on the Celtic frontier, with large-scale fighting around Ariminum and the severe defeat of an army commanded by the consul P. Aelius Paetus. In the autumn came the victorious return of Scipio and his army to Rome from Africa, his great triumphal procession, and days of fervent celebration and thanksgiving to the gods for having spared Rome from destruction and brought her victory instead.⁸⁸

The catalyst that brought the East to the *Patres*' attention in autumn 201—the sole and necessary catalyst—is clear: the arrival of a series of embassies from Greek states, warning of the conduct and dangers posed

86. See Holleaux 1935: 297–334.

87. On senatorial myopia, see Astin 1968; Veyne 1975: 804–9; Eckstein 1987: xv–xxii.

88. The long controversy over peace with Carthage: Eckstein 1987: 260–64, with sources; Paetus's defeat: 54–56, with sources. Scipio's triumph and the thanksgiving for “having brought about so enormous a change” from the early years of the war: Polyb. 16.23; cf. Livy 30.45. Given severe problems on the close-by northern frontier, Harris (1979:

by Philip and Antiochus. To employ Lebow's terminology again,⁸⁹ the Greek embassies served as a catalyst by, precisely, reshaping the thinking of the Roman decision-making elite. That is, the envoys' impact was that the Senate came to perceive the costs and risks of inaction in the East as more dangerous than the costs and risks of acting forcefully there; the warnings from the Greeks made the *Patres* suddenly consider taking forceful actions against the kings. The terminology of Thomas Christensen provides an additional useful general perspective on what was occurring: after 207 and especially after 204 the sudden weakness of the most vulnerable significant actor in the state-system (i.e., Egypt) tempted the radical expansion of its rivals (Macedon and Syria), which in turn sent destabilizing shocks and ripples throughout the system—shocks and ripples that eventually reached all the way to Rome.⁹⁰

That the embassies constituted the main catalyst of the Roman decision was Polybius's own analysis. Though his actual detailed account of the events of winter 201/200 is unfortunately lost, another, extant passage provides the crucial key to what he said. This passage describes the decision of Philip and Antiochus to begin attacking the collapsing Ptolemaic empire, a decision that Polybius violently castigates on moral grounds because it took advantage of a child ruler. The Achaean historian then remarks:

Who among those who reasonably find fault with Fortune for her conduct of human affairs will not be reconciled to her when he learns how she afterwards made the kings pay the due penalty for their crimes? . . . For even while the kings were breaking faith with each other while destroying the kingdom of the child, she drew the attention of the Romans to them, and very justly and properly visited upon them the very evils that they had been designing to bring upon others.

Polyb. 15.20.5–6

Soon, Polybius continues, Roman intervention in the East led to the military defeat of both Philip and Antiochus; and eventually it led to the destruction of Philip's dynasty and the severe weakening of the dynasty of Antiochus (20.7).

Fortune (Tyche) thus alerted the Romans to the conduct of the kings

217–18) seems wrong to attribute the decision of 200 to the need for the Romans to find an outlet for their aggressive energies.

89. Lebow 2001: 614 (cf. text above at n. 59).

90. Christensen 1993: 329–30. Needless to say, Christensen does not have Hellenistic history in mind in emphasizing the importance of the most vulnerable significant actor—which makes his paradigm all the more interesting.

(ἐπιστήσασα *Ρωμαίους*), and eventually visited upon Philip and Antiochus the very fate they had designed for the Ptolemies. This was crucial to Polybius in terms of the immediate cause of the Roman intervention that began in 200 B.C.—for without this action of Tyche in alerting the Romans the kings would have gotten away with their plans.⁹¹ And how, in Polybius's view, did Tyche alert the Romans to the dangerous situation in the East? A volume later Polybius depicts Philip V, while campaigning in Asia Minor in autumn 201, as worried because multiple embassies from the victimized Greek states were journeying to Rome to complain about him (16.24.3). The conclusion is therefore clear: Polybius thought the intervention of Tyche to alert the Romans was carried out via the appearance of the Greek embassies before the Senate in Rome in winter 201/200; this was the means by which Tyche alerted the Romans to the actions of the kings.⁹²

Something that the Greek ambassadors said, then, caused a sea change in attitude among the *Patres*. Probably different envoys said different things, but we have already pointed to the main issue. The answer was adduced seventy years ago by Maurice Holleaux: the ancient tradition indicates that the envoys warned the *Patres* that Philip V and Antiochus III, each of whom was already a formidably powerful king in his own right, had now combined their forces and become allies; they had a secret compact to destroy the Ptolemaic state, which would increase their power even more; and their ambitions did not stop there.⁹³ The pact between the kings is Polybius's sole subject where Tyche's alerting the Romans is reported (15.20). Both the Ptolemaic government (Justin 30.2.8–3.5) and the government of Rhodes (App. *Mac.* 4) are explicitly named in other sources as warning the Senate of the pact; since both Livy and

91. This key phrase in Polyb. 15.20.6 is often wrongly translated, as if Fortune simply “raised up the Romans” against the kings—a simple historical fact, not a causal connection. Hence some scholars think that Polybius does not stress the impact of the envoys: so Errington 1971: 348 and 352; Derow 1979: 10–11. But the correct translation is in Passerini 1931: 182 n. 1, followed rightly by Walbank 1967: 474. There are multiple other examples in Polybius of the Greek verb ἐφίστημι meaning “to alert” or even “to open [someone’s] eyes concerning,” with sharp change of direction in action following the awakening: see, e.g., 2.61.11; 12.25.k.7; 15.9.3; 23.11.4; 27.9.6; 27.10.2; 38.8.4. There are no other examples of Polybian usage of ἐφίστημι to mean “raise up against.” See now the detailed discussion in Eckstein 2005.

92. Polybius's statement at 18.46.14 that Rome went to war “for the freedom of the Greeks” may also reflect the impact of the envoys—for the huge shift of power to Philip and Antiochus, of which the envoys warned the Senate, would soon have destroyed the freedom of the states that dispatched the envoys.

93. See Holleaux 1935: 306–32. Sources on the pact and the Greek envoys are comparatively numerous for an ancient event: Polyb. 3.2.8, 15.20, 16.1.8–9, and 24.6; cf.

Justin in turn link the Pergamene embassy at Rome directly with the Rhodian one (Livy 31.2.1; Justin 30.3.5), we should assume that the envoys of Attalus strongly seconded the envoys of the Rhodians.⁹⁴

In Appian and Justin the pact is depicted as a rumor—and prominent modern scholars have even denied that the pact ever existed.⁹⁵ This is a crucial issue, since Roman intervention becomes necessary only if there was indeed an Antigonid-Seleucid agreement that threatened to bring down the entire eastern Mediterranean state-system. Otherwise, if the Antigonids and Seleucids actually remained in strong opposition to each other, the Greek states—once they discovered that the rumor of the pact was false—could simply have realigned themselves with one power or the other but within the old system, thereby preserving its multipolar essence without the necessity of outside intervention.

But here it is hard to deny the weight that Polybius, who is our earliest and our most politically sophisticated source, gives to the pact, especially in 15.20, where Tyche is presented as alerting the Romans to it—the act that led directly to the decisive Roman intervention of 200. Moreover, a few chapters after Polybius makes his first emphatic reference to the pact between Philip and Antiochus and its world-historical importance, at 3.2.8, he castigates historians who make nonexistent treaties the centerpiece of their historical analysis (3.26: his target is Philinus of Agrigentum). In a society where ridicule was a powerful weapon among intellectuals, Polybius would not have taken such a chance—not in book 3 and not in book 15—unless he thought his information on the pact between Philip and Antiochus, and the profound impact it had, was solid.

It has been suggested that Polybius has been misled about these events by his Rhodian sources (the historians Antisthenes and Zeno), who perhaps retailed an exaggerated or fictional Rhodian version of the pact, as well as exaggerating the Rhodian role in bringing about the downfall of Philip—propaganda to which Polybius has naively fallen victim.⁹⁶ Yet Polybius did not employ his Rhodian sources uncritically; on the contrary, in a detailed analysis with specific examples, he warned his readers

14.1a.4–5; Livy 31.14.5; App. *Mac.* 4 (somewhat confused); Justin 30.2.8, cf. Pomp. Trog. *Prol.* 30; Hieron. *in Dan.* 11.13 (= Porphyry *FGrH* 260 F 45); and John Antioch. frg. 54 (*FGrH* 558 F 54: confused). In Livy's Latin tradition, Rome acts mostly to aid threatened Greek friends; as is, this appears to tell only part of the story.

94. See Briscoe 1973: 43; Gera 1998: 62 n. 9.

95. So Magie 1939: 32–44; Errington 1971: 336–54, cf. Errington 1986: esp. 5 and n. 16.

96. Magie 1939: 42–43; Errington 1971: esp. 352–54; cf. Errington 1986: 5 and n. 16.

that the Rhodian historians were prone both to exaggeration of incidents involving Rhodes and to pro-Rhodian versions of events (16.14–20). Thus it is hard to believe he would have been easily fooled by them; besides, he also claims access to a very wide variety of sources (i.e., not just Rhodian sources) for these important events of the late third century (16.14.2).⁹⁷ Further, not only does no source ever depict either Philip or Antiochus as denying the existence of the pact, but the working of the pact appears as a natural occurrence within Polybius's narrative of Philip's campaign on the coast of Asia Minor in 201. Thus at 16.1.8–9 and 16.24.6 we find descriptions of the Seleucid logistical support that Philip in Asia Minor was owed “according to the terms of the treaty” (κατὰ τὰς συνθήκας) and then gained from Zeuxis, Antiochus's viceroy in the region.⁹⁸ There is also the fact that the summer of 201 witnessed the simultaneous grand offensives of Antiochus against Ptolemaic Coele Syria and Philip against Ptolemaic possessions in the southeastern Aegean (including Philip's seizure of the great Ptolemaic naval base at Samos, along with a good part of the Ptolemaic fleet). Was this a mere coincidence—perhaps even a coincidence that led to a false conclusion about the existence of a pact? No—for the existence of direct Antigonid-Seleucid cooperation against the Ptolemies has been startlingly proven by the recent publication of an important inscription from Bargylia in Caria, which shows Philip in 201 turning over to Antiochus a town he has just conquered from the Ptolemies.⁹⁹

Many more arguments could be adduced in favor of the historicity of the pact, but it should be clear now that from winter 203/202 the eastern Mediterranean state-system was indeed undergoing a profound crisis.¹⁰⁰ And the Greek envoys must have made convincing and frightening arguments at Rome for the existence of the pact and its negative implications, for the *Patres* were not fools—and in the autumn of 201 and winter 201/200 they were already confronting a crisis closer to

97. Note that the scenes of the Greek embassies before the Senate probably appeared at some point between the current 16.24 and 16.25—i.e., almost immediately after Polybius's detailed criticism at 16.14–20 of the Rhodian historians as exaggerators of events and purveyors of pro-Rhodian propaganda.

98. The Rhodians, with excellent sources of information in Caria (just across from their home island), would have been aware of this help: cf. Berthold 1984: 120–21. Polybius indicates that the help was somewhat reluctant on Zeuxis's part (16.1.8–9). Magie (1919: 39), denying the existence of the pact, is forced to argue that Polybius or his sources simply made these two incidents with Zeuxis up.

99. See Blümel 2000: 94–96 (original publication), and the commentaries of Wiemer 2001: esp. 12–13, and Dreyer 2002.

100. The question of the historicity of the Kings' Pact requires in itself a separate detailed study. Here I have presented simply some of the most powerful arguments for its historicity.

home, a large war looming with the Celtic tribal peoples of northern Italy. Yet the Senate was prevailed upon to act.¹⁰¹

One argument that the envoys may have employed to frighten the Senate was not only the existence of Antiochus III's large navy but the fact that Philip V's own large navy—newly built—had just shown itself an effective force off Asia Minor in summer 201. Roman control of the seas around Italy was thus suddenly at risk.¹⁰² The envoys from Alexandria, warning of the pact, could point to Philip's seizure of the great Ptolemaic naval base at Samos.¹⁰³ And as John Grainger has recently suggested, the envoys could point as well to the general scale of the military resources that were potentially in play in the crisis, in the potential addition of the vast resources of Egypt to those of Philip and/or Antiochus. At Raphia in 217, the combined armies of Antiochus and Ptolemy IV had totaled 150,000 men; at Panium in 200, the armies of Antiochus and Ptolemy V had perhaps totaled 120,000 men: these were military forces twice the size of the huge Roman army at Cannae. The union of (say) Antiochus with the resources of Egypt would mean potential military resources at least triple those that had been available to Carthage; the union of Philip with the resources of Egypt meant military resources perhaps double those that Carthage had enjoyed.¹⁰⁴

Some scholars argue that the alarm evidently caused in the Senate by the news of the pact between the kings occurred because the Romans did not understand the limited goals of wars among the Greek states.¹⁰⁵ But we have seen that a benign view of the conduct of states within the Hellenistic system is not accurate—not in the East and not in the West. And thus while it has been proposed here that Roman senators in winter 201/200 did not know in detail the geopolitics of the Greek East, one may still suggest that they knew enough (from the experience of Pyrrhus and of Philip V himself) to be wary of certain developments there, and that the Senate acted as well because it did understand well enough the ruthless principles of the militarized anarchy in which Rome existed, both the local environment and the broader one. In other words, the *Patres* had a

101. On the Celtic crisis, see text above at n. 88.

102. See Griffith (1935: 6–9), who notes that the envoys, to arrive in Rome in the autumn, would have been dispatched while the naval fighting was at its height. The Senate understood how sea power had been used a decade earlier to prevent Philip from attacking coastal Illyria—or coming to Italy (ibid. 8–9 and 12–13).

103. So Gera 1998: 62–63.

104. See the comments of Grainger 2002: 28.

105. So Griffith 1935: 6.

fair idea of what the ultimate consequences might be if the power of Philip and/or Antiochus was allowed continued great expansion.¹⁰⁶

Moreover, there is a fundamental problem with the idea that the Senate (and, later, Polybius) was intentionally misled especially by the Rhodians—and this has to do with the Rhodians' own actions. We know that in spring 197 they withdrew their naval forces from the Aegean, where they had been deployed against Philip V, and concentrated them instead off the southern coast of Asia Minor, in order to battle the large fleet of Antiochus III—precisely because they were convinced that Antiochus was coming west to help his ally Philip in the war that was still undecided in Greece.¹⁰⁷ To undertake a war against the conqueror of Asia was a very dangerous action for the Rhodian state to take—the kind of action not taken by a government (especially a government facing a much larger power) unless the decision-making elite believes itself in possession of convincing information. At the least, this shows that no one was intentionally misleading the Senate. It is modern doubts about the existence or scope of the pact that seem themselves misplaced.

One other important factor in the eventual decision of the Senate needs to be underlined: the Roman experience of Hannibal. The Carthaginian general had inflicted enormous damage on Rome and Italy when he struck at the Republic from bases of operation seemingly impossibly far away, in Punic Spain. After the experience of Hannibal, any warning of an overseas threat was more likely to be taken seriously by the Senate than before 218.¹⁰⁸

We therefore must give crucial weight in the world-historical Roman decision of 200 to a contingent event: the arrival at Rome in autumn 201 of a series of embassies from important Greek states, warning the Senate about the conduct and intentions of the kings and asking for Roman intervention and help. In political-science terms, the Greek envoys presented the Senate with a “worst-case scenario” about the kings—and

106. The militarism and ruthless competition among the Greek states in the Hellenistic period: above, chap. 4; the politics of Italy and the western Mediterranean: above, chap. 5. Polybius, of course, did not expect his primarily Greek readership to find the pact, with its hugely destructive implications, an unbelievable action: see Austin 1986: 457.

107. Polyb. 18.41a.1 (a crucial fragment of a larger narrative); Livy 33.19–20 (reflecting that larger Polybian narrative: see Briscoe 1973: 2). Note the similar theme of alliance between Philip and Antiochus as late as 197 in the retrospective at Livy 35.32.8–9 (from Polybian material: Briscoe 1981: 2, cf. 195).

108. Livy 31.7.2–3 is explicit on this; see below.

the *Patres* reacted accordingly.¹⁰⁹ It is equally important to us analytically, however, that the series of Greek embassies to Rome was also a typical event within the anarchic structure of ancient Mediterranean politics—one we have come across often before. In ancient state-systems, less powerful states under severe pressure often called upon a more powerful state for help. And decision makers in the greater states usually responded positively, in order to increase the power, prestige, and influence of their polity and/or to prevent the accretion of power, prestige, and influence to another large state. Powerful states thereby accepted the risk that localized conflicts might turn into larger clashes; it was preferable to the risks inherent in appearing to be hesitant or weak. Thucydides underlined this phenomenon and its dangers two centuries before the events we are discussing.¹¹⁰ It was a common practice in the Romans' world: hence the appeal of Teanum Sidicinum to Capua for help against the Samnites (342 B.C.); the appeal of Capua to Rome (342); the appeal of Messana in Sicily to both Rome and Carthage for help against Syracuse (264); the appeal of Saguntum in Spain to Rome for help against Hannibal—and the appeal of the Torboletae to Hannibal for help against Saguntum (220). The reason this process remained as alive in the third century B.C. as in the fifth century, with all its potentially destructive impact on relations between the greater states, was that smaller polities under external threat and lacking the power to protect themselves had no alternative within the harsh interstate anarchy but to turn to a larger state as a protector.¹¹¹

Gaetano de Sanctis asserts that the Roman decision of 200 to accept the pleas of the Greek states to intervene in the East grew out of the Roman desire to dominate.¹¹² There is truth in that statement: Rome's viability as a great power depended on the extent to which it could dominate the states that surrounded it, and be perceived as dominating them. And certainly by the third century the Roman Republic displayed a habit of command toward the outside world. Moreover, if war is an attempt to impose one's will upon others, it is significant that Rome was almost

109. On the "worst-case scenario" and its place in Realist thinking about state decision making, see above, chap. 2, text at nn. 7 and 77.

110. The classic case is the appeal of Corcyra to Athens for military help against Corinth: Thuc. 1.28–44, discussed above in chap. 3.

111. The negative impact of this natural process of the interstate anarchy is underlined by Hoyos 1998: chaps. III, XII, and XVI. By contrast, Harris (1979: 217) depicts the trend at Rome to answer pleas for help from smaller states as a uniquely aggressive Roman trait.

112. De Sanctis 1923: 21–31. In a similar moralizing vein: Harris 1979: 212–18; Mandell 1989.

always at war.¹¹³ But the analytical problem at this point is familiar: the desire to dominate, the habit of command, and the engagement in almost constant warfare did not differentiate Rome from any other great or medium (or even small) Hellenistic power. No exceptionally intense desire to dominate (at least in ancient terms) is shown by Roman action here, and thus the explanatory force of phrases such as “the Roman desire to dominate” is weakened. Polybius thought it was the natural tendency of any large state to respond affirmatively to pleas for help from weaker entities (24.10.11); and he assumed such pleas for help were a natural part of the interstate system. In part the desire to dominate and the tendency to answer such pleas for help can be said to arise from militaristic and aggressive unit culture—but as we have repeatedly seen, these actions, as well as the aggressive and militaristic unit cultures from which they sprang, were also, simultaneously, natural responses and adaptations to the dangers of the environment.¹¹⁴

This was one of the principles of Mediterranean interstate relations at work in the events of winter 201/200. The embassies from the Greek states under military and diplomatic pressure from Philip and/or Antiochus alerted the Roman Senate to the consequences for Rome if nothing was done to check the rising power of the kings. The Greek embassies to Rome were, in turn, part of the response by the less powerful units within the Hellenistic state-system to the power-transition crisis initiated in the system by the faltering of the Ptolemaic empire. Philip and Antiochus reacted to this collapse of the previously existing Hellenistic balance of power by ferociously attacking the Ptolemaic possessions beyond Egypt, and (it seems) preparing to attack the Ptolemies’ base in Egypt itself. Rhodes, Pergamum, Egypt, and even Athens mobilized to block Philip and/or Antiochus militarily; but success was equivocal.¹¹⁵ Thinking themselves unable on their own to check the surging power of the kings, the governing elites of these states turned to an outsider, the Ro-

113. On the Roman habit of command, see Derow 1979: 1–15. On the Roman will to be free, without having to consider others: see Veyne 1975: 794–96. Similar for Athens: Forde 1986: 442.

114. Not that the Senate eagerly responded to every plea for help: in 264 the Senate hesitated long over the pleas of the Mamertines (Polyb. 1.10.1–11.2); it refused the request of the city of Utica in 240 to come under Roman protection against Carthage (1.83.11), and refused the first request of the mercenaries on Sardinia (ibid.); in the 230s it long ignored the Italian merchants subject to Illyrian piracy (Polyb. 2.8.3); it long refused the pleas of Saguntum for help against the rising power of Carthage in Spain (3.15.1). We are, as usual, speaking of a trend.

115. See above, chap. 4, text at n. 114.

man Republic, to provide crucial help.¹¹⁶ These Greek decision-making elites must have known that the price for such help, in terms of eventual Roman patronage over an artificially restored Hellenistic balance of power—or even in terms of Roman hegemony—might be high. But faced with Philip and Antiochus (or, worse, either Philip or Antiochus emerging as sole hegemon over the East), it appears that the consequences of Roman intervention were a cost that the governing elites of these states were prepared to pay. The Greek envoys of winter 201/200 may actually have thought only in terms of defeating the kings, and not consciously in terms of balancing them—for balancing as a concept is rarely explicit in ancient geopolitical literature. But from this distance, it appears clear that the Greek states were instinctively seeking such a balance against the monarchs—as Greek states habitually and instinctively did against any rising power. And they recognized that every means of dealing with a threat has its costs.¹¹⁷

Modern political scientists will be comfortable with all of the above considerations of *Machtpolitik*. But different cultures really are different, and one factor that may have weighed in the senatorial decision of winter 201/200 was a factor very foreign to moderns—a religious factor.

The Kingdom of Pergamum was one of the states pleading for Roman intervention (Livy 31.2.1). Attalus I of Pergamum had been an ally of Rome and Aetolia in the First Macedonian War, until he was driven out of the war by defeat in 208 at Philip's hands, combined with an invasion of Pergamum by Philip's in-law Prusias of Bithynia.¹¹⁸ Still, Attalus's good relations with Rome continued, and he was a co-swearer on the Roman side to the peace treaty that ended the war in 205 (Livy 29.13). From these considerations alone, envoys from Pergamum would have

116. The Athenians also sent an embassy to Alexandria asking for aid against Philip. Ptolemy V's government, faced with Antiochus, could provide only vague promises; meanwhile, it sent a new embassy to Rome, on behalf of the Athenians (Livy 31.9.1–5; confirmed by the Cephisodorus Inscription, first published by Meritt 1936).

117. Instinctive balancing among the Greeks: above, chap. 3, text at n. 123; instinctive balancing by the less powerful Greek states in 202–200: see Schmitt 1974: 83–84. Relative absence of explicit balancing in Greco-Roman thought: Wight 1971: 24; cf. Mommsen 1907: 790. The calculations of the Rhodians: Berthold 1984: 122–24. The actions of the Ptolemies, the Pergamenes, the Rhodians, and Athens (the Aetolians, too, if their plea is historical) are also, of course, yet another example of the thesis of Walt 1987 that states under pressure turn to the least threatening great power; “least threatening” does not mean unthreatening. From our perspective, the strategic problem for these states after 203/202 was that there were actually several powers they had to balance against simultaneously, including Rome, but more directly (as far as they were concerned) Philip and Antiochus.

118. On these events, see Walbank 1940: 95–96.

received a more attentive hearing in the Senate than those from any other of the complaining states.¹¹⁹ Even more importantly, however, in 205 the *Patres* had received an oracular prophecy that Hannibal would not be driven from Italy until the Great Mother of Pessinus in Asia Minor was introduced at Rome to be worshipped. The Senate then sent an embassy to King Attalus to ask for help: Pessinus was close to his territory, though he did not control it. Attalus exerted himself to persuade the priests at Pessinus to give the Roman envoys the Black Stone, which was a holy image of the Great Mother. The Black Stone was conveyed to Rome with great fanfare; miracles are associated with the procession of its ship up the Tiber. And by autumn 203, Hannibal had indeed left Italy: the Punic Senate recalled him to defend Carthage from the invasion of Africa launched by P. Cornelius Scipio.¹²⁰

We should not doubt that many senators were impressed with the connection between the arrival of the Great Mother in Italy and the departure of Hannibal. Of course, they will have been well aware of the events in the real world that had relieved Italy of Hannibal's army after fifteen terrifying years. But our sources are uniform that the Romans were a deeply religious people, and especially in crises; many among the *Patres* will have thought that Attalus had done them a great favor, and that they owed him a debt.¹²¹ Now, in late 201, envoys from Attalus came to the Senate asking for help—help, they argued, that was also in Rome's own ultimate best interest given the broad geopolitical threat posed by pact between the kings. Those Pergamene envoys will have carried special weight.¹²²

Livy is explicit about the intensity of religious feeling in Rome in 200 (*civitas religiosa*): immediately following the final vote for war, the Senate ordered the consul who was assigned Macedonia to vow games and

119. Especially in contrast to the Rhodians, who had previously been hostile to Roman intervention in Greece and had helped arranged the victorious peace of Macedon over Aetolia in 206. The Ptolemies and the Athenians, too, had attempted to mediate the war when Rome wished the fighting to continue in order to distract Philip from any ideas about Italy. On the conflict between Roman aims in Greece in 211–205 and those of Egypt, Rhodes, and Athens, see Eckstein 2002.

120. On these events, see Burton 1996: 312–35.

121. On Roman religiosity, especially in crises, see above, chap. 6, text at n. 145 (with sources).

122. Note that one of the Roman envoys to Attalus in 205 was Ser. Sulpicius Galba (Broughton 1951: 304, with sources), probably the brother of the P. Sulpicius Galba who was Roman commander in Greece in 210–207—and (more important here), the pro-war consul in 200 (see below). McShane (1964: 121 n. 110) notes that Attalid interests receive emphasis in Roman negotiations with Philip (Polyb. 16.25.4 and 27.2; Livy 31.16.2).

a great gift to Jupiter (31.9.5–6). More strikingly, both consuls for 200, including the consul assigned Macedonia, were long delayed in Italy because of religious duties. Serious breaches of the *pax deorum* were reported, and both consuls had to engage in ritual expiation of a series of grim prodigies, as well as institute an investigation into the plundering of the great temple of Persephone in Bruttium (Livy 31.12–13). The result of the latter task was—astonishingly—that an entire summer’s campaigning season against Philip V, that of 200 B.C., was lost (though difficulties in army recruitment from the exhausted Roman populace may also have played a part in the delay).¹²³ But in the Roman view maintaining the goodwill of the gods was of course part of the war effort, and in the Persephone case we know exactly why the Senate was so concerned. In the 270s, the story went, King Pyrrhus of Epirus had plundered the temple to help finance his wars in the West—and Persephone had punished him severely, by wrecking his war fleet. The Roman effort against Philip would now require such a war fleet, as well as a fleet of transports to take troops across the Adriatic to Greece; the goddess therefore needed to be appeased. Religion was taken seriously at Rome—including both Persephone and the Great Mother.¹²⁴

After hearing the envoys from the Greeks, the Senate proposed that what amounted to a conditional declaration of war be declared against Philip V by the Roman people: an ultimatum to Philip V that he cease his attacks against Greek states, failing which there would be war.¹²⁵ Diplomatic pressure would also be put on Antiochus (see below). Since neither Philip nor Antiochus represented a direct threat to Rome in early 200, the senatorial decision appears to envision what modern political scientists call preventive war. But preventive wars are often controversial, precisely because of the lack of a direct threat—and so it was in this case. The Army Assembly (the *comitia centuriata*), which was the popular assembly responsible for deciding peace and war, rejected the Senate proposal. It voted against war, and it voted against war overwhelmingly (Livy 31.6.3).

The rejection of a senatorial proposal by the *populus Romanus* was

123. Suggested by Bruselis 1996: 155 n. 21. Roman exhaustion: see Livy 31.6.3, emphasized rightly by Bruselis.

124. Detailed discussion in Warrior 1996: 69–74. The Pyrrhus story: Livy 29.18.3–4; the threat: 18.9.

125. On the Roman replacement of fetial priests with the procedure of conditional declaration of war as the distance from the city of Rome of potential enemies increased (but with the principle of *rerum repetitio*—the list of the bad acts of the other side—remaining in place), see Walbank 1949: 15–19, discussed above, chap. 6, text at n. 153.

a most unusual event. But the Roman people were worn out by the hardships of the Second Punic War, Livy says, and there was a lack of a direct threat (3.1.6.3–4). It is important for our conception of Roman society and internal culture circa 200 B.C. (its unit attributes) that this vote suggests both a broad lack of interest in the eastern affairs among the male citizens who voted in the popular assemblies at Rome, and a reluctance to engage in warfare unless the threat was truly imminent and clear.¹²⁶

The reasoning of the Senate in favor of preventive war, and the bitter experiences behind that decision, seem apparent in a speech that Livy attributes to P. Sulpicius Galba, one of the two consuls of 200. The context of the speech is an informal public meeting (*contio*) following the initial overwhelming rejection of the proposal for war. Galba is seeking to convince the *populus* to vote again, this time in favor of war:

It seems to me, citizens, that you do not understand the question before you. The question is not whether you will have peace or war—for Philip will not leave that matter open for your decision, seeing that he is preparing a mighty war on land and sea. Rather, the question is whether you are to send your legions across to Macedonia or meet the enemy here in Italy. What a difference that makes, if you never knew it before, you found out during the recent Punic War. . . . So let Macedonia, not Italy, have war; let it be the enemy's farms and cities that are laid waste, not ours! We have already learned from experience. . . . Go to vote, then, with the blessings of the gods, and ratify what the Senate has proposed.

Livy 3.1.7.2–3 and 13–14

Did P. Sulpicius Galba actually say something like this at a crucial public meeting that preceded the second assembly, the one that eventually voted for war? Livy was writing two hundred years later; and the speech as we have it in his text is, in its Latin rhetoric and construction, essentially a composition by Livy himself.¹²⁷ But Livy employs speeches only rarely in his narrative of the postlegendary period; these historical-era speeches are not characterized by the most elaborate rhetorical devices (i.e., they are not mere literary set-pieces); and where the sources of these speeches can be traced (for instance, back to Polybius), the historical essence of the speeches reflects those sources.¹²⁸ And Galba's point is cer-

126. On that reluctance, see Kostial 1995: 117–24; cf. Champion 1997: 2.

127. Completely doubting the historicity of Galba's speech as well as the sequence of events Livy records: Dahlheim 1968: 242–44, n. 23. As we have it, a Livian rhetorical construction: still important is Ullmann 1929: 135.

128. See discussion in Briscoe 1973: 20–22.

tainly simple enough to have been remembered. All in all, there is a good case that in general the speeches in Livy in this later part of his work at least reflect an authentic tradition on what was said.¹²⁹

Since international-systems theorists argue that the principles of international relations have remained stable over time,¹³⁰ one may note here the speech of Vice Admiral Russell Willson, USN, before a meeting of the Joint Staff Planners in the Pentagon, on August 29, 1945 (the potential enemy is the U.S.S.R.): “When it becomes evident that forces of aggression are being arrayed against us by a potential enemy, we cannot afford, through any misguided and perilous idea of avoiding an aggressive attitude, to permit the first blow to be struck against us.”¹³¹ Admiral Willson was no doubt speaking in the shadow of Pearl Harbor; Galba in Livy is explicit that he is speaking in the shadow of Hannibal’s invasion of Italy. That is: the bitter experiences of decision-making elites in a militarized international anarchy appear to lead to similar sorts of grim state decisions. Galba’s argument for preventive war—no doubt aided by the political maneuvering of those men and factions in the Senate that favored the war—was eventually successful. The Army Assembly, shortly after its initial rejection of the advice of the Senate, voted at a second meeting for a conditional declaration of war against Philip V.¹³²

In terms of following a Thucydidean “layered” approach in analyzing the decision of 200, we arrive at this point at the personal motives of the consul Galba. The augural lottery had allotted him the command against Macedon should it come to war (Livy 31.6.1). Since Galba had already commanded in Greece during the First Macedonian War (in 210–207), scholars have sometimes found suspect the lottery result giving Macedonia to him in 200; it seems too militarily convenient.¹³³ But recent studies have reasserted the honesty of the augural lottery for *provinciae*: the lottery procedure was hedged about with ceremony and religious feeling; the lottery pitcher was itself one of the main symbols

129. Ibid. 20; cf. now Quillin 2004.

130. See above, chap. 1, text at n. 16 (with examples).

131. Quoted in Copeland 2000: 164.

132. Some scholars have sought to account for the late departure of Galba and his army for the East by arguing that there was a months-long gap between the first and second war votes in the Army Assembly. But no such gap in time is indicated by Livy (see Warrior 1996: 69–70), and the reasons for Galba’s late departure were clearly his religious duties, possibly combined with difficulties in army recruitment: see text above at nn. 123 and 124.

133. Cynicism: MacDonald and Walbank 1937: 207; Scullard 1973: 93; Briscoe 1973: 69–70, cf. 45. In general: Taylor 1966: 73 and n. 29.

of the order of the augural priests; a child picked the sequence of wooden balls from the pitcher. Thus P. Sulpicius Galba may have felt, if anything, that the gods had given him a special responsibility for defending Rome in this year.¹³⁴ Some scholars also propose that ambition to win the glory of a military victory over Philip (as great as that of Africanus over Hannibal) played a role in Galba's behavior.¹³⁵ Ambition such as this is always possible in a Roman noble, but one must stress again that although we today know that the Romans are going to win, the Romans did not know. Galba's military experience of Philip V in 210–207 might well have led him to conclude that victory was uncertain, and Philip and the Macedonians were formidable opponents—for he had not done well previously in Greece against the king. Indeed, one could argue that P. Sulpicius Galba's experience of Philip's formidable army and generalship in 210–207 makes more understandable the fears of Philip that we find expressed in his speech to the assembly in Livy 31.7.¹³⁶

Yet despite the senatorial proposal in favor of war, it is also clear that senatorial opinion was itself divided, and that some in the Senate opposed the war strongly. Thus before the Army Assembly vote that rejected the war, Q. Baebius, one of the ten tribunes of the plebeians, in a speech before the people directly attacked the Senate as warmongers, "sowing war upon war, so that the common people might never enjoy peace" (Livy 31.6.4). The Baebii were an important senatorial family. Tradition had a relative of this tribune (perhaps his father), Q. Baebius Tamphilus, on an (alleged) senatorial embassy in 219 to warn Hannibal to desist from the siege of Saguntum—but perhaps he was instead on the embassy of 220 that warned Hannibal not to besiege Saguntum in the first place; in 218 this man certainly was on the senatorial embassy that delivered war to Carthage, which demonstrates his high political standing.¹³⁷ Another relative of the tribune of 200 (perhaps his brother), Cn. Baebius Tamphilus, was also an elected official that year—aedile of the plebeians—and oversaw the production of a work by the comic playwright Plautus in which envoys from Greece are castigated for taking up "room at the

134. Religious honesty of the lot: Eckstein 1976: 122–25; see now the thorough study in Stewart 1998: chap. I.

135. So Briscoe 1973: 46; Harris 1979: 217–18 (Sulpicius and his supporters felt "entitled to the opportunities of war").

136. This is speculative; but Galba's eventual campaign against Philip in 199 was in fact not a success: see above, chap. 6, text at n. 77.

137. Q. Baebius Tamphilus in 219 and 218: see Broughton 1951: 237 and 239 (with sources). Perhaps 220, not 219: see Briscoe 1973: 71. On the embassies of 220 and 218 and the origins of the Hannibalic War, see above, chap. 5.

dinner table” that rightfully belongs to solid Roman farmers impoverished by the Hannibalic War.¹³⁸ In late 200 this Cn. Baebius Tamphilus was elected one of the four praetors for 199: the praetorship was the second highest regularly elected office, and Cn. Baebius’s election suggests both the power of his family and (again) the popularity of his political position. This Cn. Baebius was badly defeated in 199 by the Insubrian Celts in the Po Valley, with the loss of almost seven thousand soldiers, a “catastrophe” (Livy 32.7.5–7: *clades*); yet both Cn. Baebius (against much opposition) and his brother M. Baebius eventually reached the consulship—the highest regularly elected public office.¹³⁹ All of this demonstrates that the Baebii were a powerful family politically, and thus Q. Baebius’s opposition to the war motion in 200 suggests that there was a significant minority among the *Patres* who thought the war unnecessary and unwise.

Who else among the senatorial families agreed with the Baebii we cannot know. It is sometimes suggested that their opposition to the war was backed by P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus himself—the conqueror of Hannibal and in 200 B.C. the single most important senator. Scipio’s alleged connection to opposition to the war comes partly because one of the compromises about the war made at Rome in 200 was that none of Scipio’s veterans would be subject to being drafted for it, although they could volunteer (Livy 31.8.6). The measure sounds similar to Q. Baebius’s complaint in Livy about war upon war piled upon an exhausted populace (31.6.4) and was perhaps partly a response to that complaint. Further, one of Scipio’s officers in Africa was a certain L. Baebius (Livy 30.25.2, otherwise unknown).¹⁴⁰ But the personal links between Africanus and the Baebii remain slim, and when we do get a statement from Africanus about what the Roman stance in the East should be, in winter 195/194, it is that Rome was making a great mistake in withdrawing its army currently in Greece back to Italy when there remained a threat in the East from Antiochus the Great (Livy 34.43.1–5). The existence of such a later strategic sentiment makes it dangerous to assume that Scipio in 200 op-

138. See Plaut. *Stich.* 494–504, cf. 167–70. Plautus’s play was put on as part of the Plebeian Games of 200 (Livy 31.50.3).

139. On Cn. Baebius Tamphilus (consul 182) and his brother M. Baebius (consul 181), see Broughton 1951: 324 and 326 n. 3. Cn. Baebius’s defeat and subsequent political career: Rosenstein 1990: 24–25 (with sources). Indeed, Baebius as consul was assigned to fight on the northern frontier again (*ibid.* 29) and later held the elections for the consulship for 181—at which his brother was elected consul (Livy 40.17.8).

140. Stressing the alleged connection between the Baebii and Scipio Africanus: Scullard 1973: 42 and 87; cf. (e.g.) Dorey 1959: 293–94; Briscoe 1973: 70–71.

posed war against the great Greek monarchs.¹⁴¹ In any case the Baebii were a powerful and influential family in their own right, and their opposition by itself is enough to show that the senatorial aristocracy was divided on war in 200. Indeed, the rejection of the war motion by the *populus* was something unlikely to have happened in the face of unified senatorial opinion.

The original stance of the voting populace was eventually changed by persuasion coming from a powerful group within the Senate. Livy has the Senate itself warning, after the first rejection of the war, that postponement of the war would be harmful to the state (Livy 31.6.6), and Galba's speech before the people was, as we have seen, that preventive war was necessary: better to strike Philip now in Greece than to wait for him to invade Italy. In Galba's speech as we have it in Livy (unlikely to be totally fictional; see above), there is no mention of glory, or the prospects of loot, or the right of Rome to rule everywhere in the world: the emphasis is on self-defense.

Since the Senate officially advised for war and the people officially voted in the end for it, it cannot be said that Rome was drawn into the Greek East against its will. On the contrary: the Senate made a conscious decision in 200 to assert Roman power in the Greek world (as it had done in 229 and 219 against the Illyrians, and from 216 in response to Philip V). The *populus Romanus* in 200 eventually—reluctantly—agreed.

The gravity with which the majority of the *Patres* viewed the strategic situation is shown by the fact that a war in the East was going to be so expensive that the Roman treasury would not be able to pay off the public debt incurred in the Hannibalic War; the Senate announced this quickly. The Roman citizens who were creditors of the state were most unhappy (Livy 31.13.2–4), and the political problem must have been foreseen—because many of these creditors were themselves senators (26.36.3).¹⁴² The bitter complaints of the creditors were only partially resolved by a senatorial decision to let public land near Rome to the creditors at a minimal rent (31.13.5–9); this constituted yet another serious loss to state revenue. Decision-making elites do not make decisions that

141. Scipio's sentiment in winter 195/194 was perhaps partly self-interested, for he had been elected one of the consuls for 194 and might thus gain the eastern command he was recommending be retained. Politicians are indeed self-interested, but Polybius—not a naive person—believed Scipio was a sincere Roman patriot (see 10.49). For a balanced assessment of Scipio's motives, see Briscoe 1983: 116–17; cf. Eckstein 1987: 309–10. Scipio in 194 fought against the Celts of the Po Valley—not very successfully (see Broughton 1951: 343).

142. Discussion of senators as creditors: Bruselis 1996: 167–69.

carry such serious financial costs, including high personal costs, unless they are motivated by serious security concerns.¹⁴³ Similarly, it appears that late in 201 (before the actual war vote in the Army Assembly) the Senate ordered a large war fleet, previously stationed off Africa as part of the final military effort against Carthage, into the Adriatic. Its task was to watch against Macedonian action; and the Senate appointed as its commander M. Valerius Laevinus, one of the Roman commanders in chief in the First Macedonian War (31.3.2–4). This act, too, shows the seriousness with which the Senate now viewed the situation across the Adriatic—as does the fact that Laevinus, though an ex-consul, was willing to take command at a much lower rank, *propraetor* (31.3.3).¹⁴⁴ Meanwhile, although the general demobilization of the large armies of the Second Punic War continued (as the worn-out *populus* demanded), a new legion of allied troops was sent specially to guard Bruttium (31.8.11), and plans were made to establish colonies of Scipionic veterans in Apulia (31.4.3). Both these regions faced toward Greece and the East—and their loyalty to Rome was suspect, for they had sided with Hannibal.

There is an additional proof of the seriousness with which the Senate now viewed the situation in the East with regard to Philip and Antiochus both: not only did the embassy that the Senate sent out to the eastern Mediterranean in spring 200 carry a stern ultimatum to Philip (on which see below), but the envoys also had a second major assignment—to attempt to mediate the ongoing war between Antiochus and the Ptolemies. That latter task deserves underlining, for this appears to be the first time that Rome ever attempted mediation between two major Greek states. That is: the decision to intervene diplomatically with Antiochus marks a real departure in Roman conduct. Such a departure shows once more the seriousness with which the Senate took the information from the Greek embassies, while simultaneously showing that that information did indeed concern both Philip and Antiochus.¹⁴⁵

The seriousness of all these measures, financial, military, and diplomatic, suggests in turn that whatever internal factors pushed Rome to-

143. Discussion of the treasury and land issues of spring 200: Briscoe 1973: 91–93; Buraselis 1996. Implications of these issues for the seriousness of the senatorial security concerns in 200: see rightly Griffith 1935: 1.

144. The dispatch of this fleet to the Adriatic has sometimes been doubted as an anachronistic invention, but see Briscoe (1973: 60) for a strong defense of historicity.

145. On the embassy to Antiochus as the first Roman attempt at mediation between Greek states, see Gruen 1984: 111–12. Sources: Polyb. 16.27.5; Justin 30.3.3; App. *Mac.* 4.

ward war in 200 (including the culture of militarism as well as the habit of command; perhaps also factional jealousy of the success of Scipio Africanus), we are dealing here primarily with a feeling among most senators that Rome had no choice—as Galba tells the populace—but to respond forcefully to the threatening situation revealed by the Greek ambassadors. In political-science terminology the *Patres* had come to “cognitive closure” on the nature of the threat Rome faced, and the need for war.¹⁴⁶ In part this was because the long-term socialization of the *Patres* to an unforgiving and fierce interstate system, and their long experience of how that system worked, left them with a bias toward pessimism—and a readiness to take up the sword. Having just experienced Hannibal, they were perhaps at this point even more open to the pessimism of a “worst-case scenario”—one now evidently emerging in the East. Indeed, recent work by political scientists has stressed that a bias toward pessimistic analysis of strategic situations is a very common phenomenon among decision-making elites in states that exist within fiercely competitive systems.¹⁴⁷

The development of cognitive closure among the majority of the Senate was primarily the work of the Greek envoys, who made a convincing case that there existed in the East not merely a threat to their own states but a quickly developing threat to Rome.¹⁴⁸ Another way of putting it is that the decisions of the directly threatened Greek states to ask for help transformed them into activators whose conduct triggered a dynamic that was, in turn, in good part determined by the system.¹⁴⁹ While significant attention must be given to the aggressive characteristics of internal Roman culture, we thus face as the prime movers of decision a series of catalysts from the outside, amid general pressures also from the outside—from the structural anarchy and the militarized multipolar system—as well as the Roman experience of and response to that cruel

146. On the dangers of “cognitive closure” in a crisis, and the feeling of “having no choice”—widespread among states in antiquity—see above, chap. 2, text at n. 52, and chap. 3, text at n. 87.

147. See Wohlforth 2001: 229–30; cf. Brooks 1997: 454. The fear of the “worst-case scenario”: above, chap. 2, text at nn. 7 and 77. Note that the famous veristic portrait busts and coin portraits of the Roman Republican aristocracy suggest not a triumphalist self-image but rather men with deeply lined faces, worn out by hard-won victories and care for the state: see Gruen 1996: 219–20 and plates 3–10. This is propaganda; but it is indicative of mood. (Similarly, Hellenistic writers frequently depict Greek leaders as deeply worried about external threats: see Beston 2001: 218–19, with sources.)

148. Scholars who believe that the Senate in 200 was misled by the Greek envoys would be saying, in political-science terms, that the Senate came to premature cognitive closure on the threat in the East (see above, chap. 2, text at n. 52).

149. The role of activators: Christiansen 1993: 330–31.

system. In short, we are dealing with the *Primat der Aussenpolitik*. The Senate and people in winter 201/200 could have chosen differently: the Senate to ignore the Greek embassies; the people to reject the advice of Senate. Indeed the people almost did choose differently. Human will was free. But amid all the political controversy over the war at Rome, and the clash of factions and personalities in the Senate and in the assembly, the cultural, systemic, and structural pressures to choose the way the Romans actually did choose acted very powerfully.

Polybius, indeed, thought that the Greek envoys of 201–200 did more even than this. They were, in addition, crucial agents in the process of the *symplokē*: the “interweaving” of the previously separate eastern and western regional state-systems of the Mediterranean into one single Mediterranean-wide system of states that was a fundamental theme of Polybius’s *Histories*. Within the eastern subsystem of the Mediterranean, hegemonic war as a response to the power-transition crisis—that is, wide-scale war to determine the new leadership and new structure of the regional system—had already broken out by summer 202.¹⁵⁰ The series of Greek envoys who arrived at Rome in autumn 201 were the catalysts for a broadening of that hegemonic war—and as it turned out, the catalysts for the permanent enlargement of the Hellenistic diplomatic field into one large interstate system.¹⁵¹

The senatorial envoys were now sent first to various states in mainland Greece, in order to round up support for the war, and then to Philip (summer 200), who was found besieging the strategic city of Abydus on the Dardanelles—crucial especially for grain supplies to Athens and as a base of operations against Pergamum. The Romans’ ultimatum was that Philip stop making war on the Greeks—and specifically that he pay compensation to Pergamum and Rhodes for his aggressions, and that he stop aggressions against the Ptolemies (Polyb. 16.34.3). The ultimatum was backed by a senatorial decree (presumably the one that led to the war vote); issued in the winter or spring, its demands about the Ptolemies refer not to Philip’s seizing of Ptolemaic towns in Thrace in summer 200 (which he had been doing), but rather to his campaign in the Aegean in 201.¹⁵² This Roman embassy, as we have seen, also had a task with Antiochus III—to provide diplomatic assistance to the Ptolemaic regime

150. On the concept of hegemonic war caused by a crisis within a failing state-system, see Gilpin 1988.

151. On Polybius’s *symplokē*—or what Aron (1973: 87–88) calls “the enlargement of the diplomatic field”—see above, chap. 4, text at n. 116.

152. Despite Gera 1998: 67.

against him. The Romans were not prepared to make war on both kings, and presumably they chose Philip because he was nearer, because of a bad past history, and because of the specific complaints against him especially from Pergamum. But they were willing to try to protect the Ptolemaic regime from Antiochus as well.

The ultimatum to Philip at Abydus was yet another example of ancient compellence diplomacy in a crisis, and as usual it failed; to Philip, as to most monarchs in the Hellenistic system, imperial expansion was his life's work—and the proof of his status and greatness. He rejected the Roman demands, and by late summer 200 Macedon and Rome were at war.¹⁵³ The Romans pursued a strategy of offense, as Galba had indicated, and a strong army was landed in Maritime Illyria in autumn 200. The first two years of the war did not go well, with the Romans failing to penetrate into Macedon either from the west in 199 or from the south in 198. But in 197 Philip made a foolish error of generalship at the battle of Cynoscephalae (he was overeager in attack, believing that the Roman forces were on the run); his army was severely defeated, with large and irreplaceable losses to the infantry phalanx. In our analysis in the first part of this chapter we have emphasized that the Romans' large resources allowed them to absorb defeats; but Philip's resources turned out to be much more limited and fragile. After Cynoscephalae he sued for peace.¹⁵⁴

A general settlement was concluded in 196. The main influence behind the details of the peace settlement was T. Quinctius Flamininus, the victor over Philip at Cynoscephalae, consul 198 and proconsul 197–194—who was then only about thirty, and whose previous experience with Greeks was limited.¹⁵⁵ Yet the politics of the peace settlement were complex. During the war the Romans not only had Pergamum, Rhodes, and Athens on their side against Philip, but had also picked up the Aetolian League as an ally again (indeed, the Aetolians had played a crucial role in the victory at Cynoscephalae), as well as gaining Philip's old

153. The population of Abydus eventually committed mass suicide rather than surrender to Philip—winning Polybius's praise: see 16.30–34 (cf. Livy 31.17–18), with Eckstein 1995: 52–54. To repeat: such was the world in which the Romans lived.

154. That Philip's resources turned out to be limited does not mean that many in Rome thought this in 200: after all, Philip had fought Rome to a draw in the previous war, which had lasted nine years (214–205). This is the principle of the mutual opaqueness of states' capabilities, tested only in war, discussed in chap. 2 above. On the unexpectedly cataclysmic nature of the battle of Cynoscephalae for Macedon, see Eckstein 1995: 183–92 (with sources).

155. Detailed discussion: Eckstein 1976: 120–22.

ally the Achaean League, which had gone over to the Roman side—under severe military pressure—in autumn 198. Theoretically, Flamininus in 196 could have simply proposed turning European Greece into a permanent Roman *provincia*, to be ruled directly by a magistrate or pro-magistrate sent out from Rome (a decision parallel to that just taken by the Senate in 197 with regard to eastern Spain). At the least, the very large grouping of *de facto* alliances that had emerged during the war provided Rome a potential structure for establishing a formal and institutionalized hegemony, with (for instance) Rome at the head of a large and organized league of states guaranteeing a general peace (*κοινή εἰρήνη*). Such a system would have rivaled the mid-fourth-century League of Corinth of Philip II and Alexander the Great as a mechanism of control. But such official institutions of Roman hegemony were also avoided by Flamininus, and by the senatorial delegation of ten men that came out to Greece in 196 to work with him (where his influence was strong).¹⁵⁶

The war did, of course, greatly increase Roman political power in European Greece. But Rome established only an informal sphere of influence there—lacking any institutional expression, and lacking even permanent alliances with individual states. In 196 Flamininus and the senatorial commission did dictate a new structure for Greek interstate life—a classic act of imperial power. Philip V was allowed to remain as ruler over a Macedon that was much reduced in scale though still potentially strong; this decision aroused the fierce opposition of the Aetolian League, the traditional rival of Macedon in central Greece. Flamininus and the senatorial delegation did free from Macedonian control all Greek cities south of Mount Olympus, including all of Thessaly (which had been Macedonian for 150 years), as well as great Macedonian military bases such as the cities of Demetrias and Chalcis. Most of these places now became independent states—though Flamininus and the senatorial delegation also gave some polities into the hands of the Aetolians or the Achaeans. Yet the Aetolians believed that for their efforts against Philip (going back to 211) they deserved far more territorial expansion than Flamininus awarded them; that he gave the Achaean League the major city of Corinth, the third of the great Macedonian strongholds south of Mount Olympus, only increased Aetolian bitterness. Corinth had been taken from the Achaeans by Macedon in the 220s; regaining the city satisfied a great Achaean ambition—and made the league the greatest power in south-

¹⁵⁶ Detailed discussion of Flamininus and the peace settlement: Eckstein 1987: 285–315.

ern Greece. Yet not even the Achaean League received a treaty of alliance with Rome at this time.¹⁵⁷

The details of the peace settlement were proclaimed by Flaminius to the assembled representatives of the Greek states at the Isthmian Games near Corinth in summer 196. The Isthmian declaration took as its general principle the “Freedom of the Greeks”; it was freedom not just from Macedon but, institutionally at least, from Rome. Flaminius may have dictated the structure of Greek politics, but Rome imposed no tribute on any Greek state, nor on Greece as a whole, nor imposed permanent garrisons anywhere; no new league of city-states appeared with Rome at its head, nor did Rome take over as leader of the old Hellenic Symmachy of Macedon—on the contrary, the Romans disbanded it. The Senate, following the pattern set in the previous wars in Illyria and in the First Macedonian War, now withdrew all Roman troops and envoys back home to Italy; by summer 194 nothing was left east of the Adriatic.

Rome, then, having defeated Philip, did not impose in Greece the sort of direct imperial rule that a victorious Hellenistic monarch would have done. Why not? The reason is probably that with the power of Macedon greatly diminished, the majority of the Senate in Rome believed the crisis pointed out to them in 200 was now over. They were wrong—and the decision to withdraw troops in 194 reflects both a continued basic lack of detailed interest at Rome in Greek affairs, and an unwillingness to become deeply involved in them. Not every senator felt the crisis was over: Scipio Africanus argued it was a great mistake to withdraw the Roman army from Greece with Antiochus the Great still on the prowl. But Scipio’s advice—even in the face of the known fact that Hannibal was now one of Antiochus’s advisors(!)—was ignored.¹⁵⁸ Having established a structure of politics in Greece that appeared unthreatening to Rome, and assuming that the Greek states understood the implications of the Roman victory against Macedon—namely that the Romans would now

157. Flaminius’s relations with the Aetolians were poor, starting with a (typical) dispute over credit for the Cynoscephalae victory: see Eckstein 1987: 287–89 (with sources). His relations with the Achaeans were good, including with the Achaean leader Aristaenus of Dyme, whom Polybius praises for policies in this period that greatly enhanced Achaean power: see Eckstein 1990: 45–71. It has sometimes been argued that Philip V now became a treaty-bound ally of Rome, but in fact he never did: see convincingly Gruen 1973: 123–36. The Achaean League did eventually receive a treaty of alliance, but not until (at the earliest) 192 or 191 B.C., in reaction to the looming threat from Antiochus the Great: see Badian 1953: 76–80.

158. See Livy 34.43.1–5, discussed above in text at n. 141.

have their wishes obeyed in Greece whenever they needed to—the majority of the Senate wished to leave the Greeks on their own.¹⁵⁹

ROMAN NONEXCEPTIONALISM:
ANTIOCHUS III AND “HEGEMONIC WAR”

This brings us to Antiochus—and the second stage in the striking events of 200–188 B.C.

The same Roman embassy that went out from Rome to force Philip V to stop his attacks on the Greeks (and failed) also had a mandate to interview Antiochus. In Polybius’s version, their task was to try to get Antiochus and the Ptolemies to compose their differences and make peace (16.27.5). Other sources say that the envoys were more blunt—Antiochus should stop attacking Egypt—and many scholars are dubious. But our sources are unanimous that the envoys attempted to protect Egypt proper from Antiochus’s aggression.¹⁶⁰

What, however, was the nature of that Roman protection? Our sources are sparse and late (the loss of Polybius’s narrative is particularly unfortunate), and reconstruction must be tentative. After the confrontation with Philip at Abydus, the Roman envoys journeyed on to Antioch, where they met Antiochus sometime in autumn 200. It is likely that the king had just gained his great victory over the Ptolemaic army at Panium in northern Judaea, and was now in control of almost all of Phoenicia, Coele Syria, and Judaea, or soon would be—a very significant advance in Seleucid power.¹⁶¹ Justin reports that in the colloquy between the Roman envoys and Antiochus, the Romans drew a distinction between the regions of “Syria” occupied by the Ptolemies, and Egypt itself: Antiochus should not invade Egypt (31.1.2). The phraseology in Appian is similar: Antiochus should keep his hands off Egypt (*Mac.* 4).¹⁶²

Prominent scholars believe that this Roman embassy to Antiochus accomplished little or nothing.¹⁶³ Yet in the strategic situation in the Lev-

159. Discussion of this decision: Eckstein 1987: 310–13.

160. Justin 30.3.3 and 31.1.2; App. *Mac.* 4. The orders to Antiochus as later Roman propaganda: Badian 1964: 114; Gruen 1984: 616; Gera 1998: 68–69; Grainger 2002: 28–29.

161. On the course of the Fifth Syrian War, and Antiochus’s gains, see Grainger 1991: 99–105. The Ptolemies never regained control of Judaea, Phoenicia, and Coele Syria. The chronological relationship between Panium and the arrival of the Roman embassy is demonstrated by the arrangement now made (see below).

162. See Ager 1996: 166–67 (no. 60).

163. So Badian 1964: 113–14; Will 1982: 120; Gruen 1984: 617; Ager 1996: 167; Ma 2002: 81–82.

ant in autumn 200, a distinction makes sense between the outlying Ptolemaic provinces, now falling (or having fallen) to Antiochus, and Egypt proper—and the fact is that Antiochus did not invade Egypt proper, though after Panium the opportunity was completely open to him. This suggests that Antiochus agreed to desist (for the moment, at least) from an advance beyond Judaea. Here it is important to note that despite his decision in autumn 200, Antiochus did not give up ambitions for the conquest of Egypt proper. On the contrary: in 196 he eagerly made a naval descent on Egypt, with the purpose of taking over the entire country, and turned back only when he learned that Ptolemy V, despite rumors, was still alive.¹⁶⁴ Thus there has to be a reason why, when the opportunity to invade Egypt existed in autumn 200, Antiochus thought better of it. A reasonable answer is that in 200 Roman intervention saved Ptolemaic rule in Egypt proper from total destruction. It was no small thing.

Antiochus, however, clearly did not see his decision to forgo Egypt (at least for the moment) as placing a limit on his ambitions or conduct elsewhere. He concentrated first on the city of Sidon in Phoenicia, which still held out for the Ptolemies (199?). And then he compensated for Egypt by means of large gains made in Asia Minor from 198, including the conquest of Ptolemaic towns all along the southern coast.¹⁶⁵ The balance of power in Asia Minor shifted rapidly in Antiochus's favor, and it shifted even more in his favor with the death of Attalus of Pergamum in spring 197. This brought a new and untried ruler, Attalus's son Eumenes II, to the Pergamene throne.¹⁶⁶ Meanwhile, the Rhodians—a potentially significant impediment to Seleucid expansion—struck a *modus vivendi* with Antiochus after the news of Cynoscephalae.¹⁶⁷ By spring 196 the king, encamped in Ionia, was proclaiming his intent to bring all the cities of Asia Minor under his control (Livy 33.38.1).¹⁶⁸ He also crossed the Hellespont into Europe, seizing the towns of the Gallipoli peninsula, and

164. Livy 33.41.3–9, clearly based on Polybian material (see Briscoe 1973: 2 and 322); cf. also App. Syr. 2. Antiochus's purpose in 196 the conquest of Egypt itself: 33.41.3, explicitly: *Antiochus suam fore Aegyptum, si tum occupasset, censebat*.

165. Detailed discussion of this campaign: see Grainger 2002: 31–41.

166. The possible unsteadiness of Eumenes II: McShane 1964: 135 and n. 156.

167. The Rhodian shift in policy toward Antiochus: see Rawlings 1976: esp. 13–14; as a sharp contrast to Rhodian policy until Cynoscephalae: see text above at n. 107. Rhodes gained new holdings on the mainland in 197 with Antiochus's help, and in 196 Antiochus named Rhodes as arbitrator in his conflict with the cities of Lampsacus and Smyrna (Polyb. 19.52.1–4). Some of the towns the Rhodians now brought under their hegemony were, ironically, Ptolemaic (Rawlings 1976: 17–18)—such was the fate of weak powers.

168. This was a long-standing Seleucid claim, on which Antiochus had acted as early as 210/209: see Ma 2002: 2–28.

Lysimacheia in Thrace—claiming that these were ancestral Seleucid holdings. At some point Antiochus had also been declared a friend and ally of the Roman people.¹⁶⁹ At a conference at Lysimacheia in summer 196, however, Roman envoys publicly demanded that he keep his hands off “independent cities” in Thrace, and withdraw from his Ptolemaic conquests in southern and western Asia Minor, urging (again) that he make peace with Ptolemy V.¹⁷⁰ Erich Gruen argues that Rome at Lysimacheia was merely trying to reconcile two warring *amici populi Romani*—namely Antiochus and the Ptolemies.¹⁷¹ But this is too sunny an interpretation: Lysimacheia was also a Roman attempt to set a boundary to Antiochus’s behavior—and it failed. The fact was that Antiochus did not even feel permanently bound to keep his hands off Egypt itself; when he heard at Lysimacheia a (false) rumor that Ptolemy V had died, he organized a descent upon Alexandria with his large war fleet, confident that he would take the entire country.¹⁷²

What had emerged by 197/196, then, was not yet Roman patronage over an artificially restored balance of power throughout the Greek East but rather an unstable bipolar geopolitical situation in the Mediterranean. There were only two remaining great powers—the Roman Republic and Antiochus’s realm; each was possessed of exceptional resources; and relations between them were unsettled. Indeed, relations between them were new, for distance had previously prevented significant contact—and these relations were never able to be put on a stable basis.

The Roman position, reiterated in a series of diplomatic interactions with Antiochus or his ambassadors, was that Antiochus should withdraw from Europe, that Rome had the right to free all the previous conquests of Philip V in Asia Minor—some of which had already fallen into the hands of Antiochus (a demand for extending the “Freedom of the Greeks” in Asia that occasionally expanded far beyond Philip’s conquests)—and to protect the three cities of Lampsacus, Smyrna, and Alexandria Troas, which had specifically appealed to Rome for protection. Antiochus’s position was that his possessions in Europe were his both by right of inheritance and by right of (re)conquest, that the same held true for all of the

169. He had received this honor by 198 (Livy 32.8.13 and 33.20.8)—perhaps after his decision in 200 not to invade Egypt.

170. Lysimacheia: Polyb. 18.50.1–9; Livy 33.39.2–7; App. Syr. 3; Diod. 28.12. The Roman demands in 196 about the Ptolemaic holdings were a senatorial response to a new embassy to Rome from Egypt: App. Syr. 2.

171. Gruen 1984: 622.

172. See text above at n. 164.

politics of Asia, and that Rome had no right—either by inheritance or by conquest—to interfere in Asia. The Senate's position seems to have been moved in part by fear of Antiochus's further ambitions: having crossed the Hellespont toward the west with a substantial army, and having operated now in Thrace for three years in a row (196, 195, and 194), who could tell where he would stop? One can assume that, conversely, Antiochus distrusted the ambitions of the Romans.¹⁷³ In any case, the fact is that during five years of diplomatic interchange, involving at least three major embassies sent by one side or by the other in attempts to settle the issues between them peaceably, neither side ever budged from the positions outlined above; neither side made any important concession along what almost immediately became a “contested periphery”—a bitterly contested one, at that.¹⁷⁴

The differences between the two sides were significant but not enormous. What was missing—on both sides—was a will to compromise. That is the central diplomatic phenomenon of these years.¹⁷⁵ To be sure, both Antiochus and the Romans each had in mind a balance of power that would make it possible to live peaceably at least into the foreseeable future. But if each side sought an acceptable balance of power with the other, each side was simultaneously engaged in an effort to get the better of the balance—to create a situation where their side possessed a more advantageous strategic position than the other side did. For the Romans, this meant that Antiochus would be excluded totally from Europe, yet Rome would also retain at least some right to interfere in his domains in western Asia Minor; for Antiochus, it meant that the Romans would be totally excluded from Asia Minor, yet he would retain a substantial directly ruled province and a large army in Europe (in Thrace). This stern attitude, where each side is willing to find a peaceful resolution but only on condition of a resulting balance of power where the strategic advantage lies with itself, may strike us as aggressive; but it does not mark out either side as exceptionally aggressive. Rather, political scientists stress that the seeking of “the better of the balance” is a natural state behavior and in fact a common occurrence in the history of international diplo-

173. See Polyb. 18.50.9 in general; and Roman defensive measures against a possible invasion of Italy in 192 (discussed below).

174. On the political-science concept of the contested periphery, see above, chap. 5, text at n. 252.

175. Rightly emphasized by Ma 2002: 97, and by Grainger 2002: 135 and 139. Yet Derow (2003: 61–65) follows Harris (1979: 219–23) in depicting Rome in its interactions with Antiochus as the sole aggressor in this dyadic relationship.

matic interaction under the pressures of anarchy.¹⁷⁶ The Romans certainly acted here as if their demands were the only ones that counted. But the same is true of Antiochus, and it is also true of Antiochus that he had always operated in this fashion, as one can see as early as the failure of the talks with Ptolemy IV over Coele Syria in winter 218/217 (Polyb. 5.67.11–68.2). Antiochus's enormous military successes since then—which had led him to adopt the title *Megas*, “Great”—will hardly have softened his attitude.¹⁷⁷

The resulting deadlock, however, was not simply a typical deadlocked diplomatic interaction between two powerful states under the pressures of anarchy—though it certainly was that. Nor was it simply a sincere clash of culture-driven perceptions about the present and the past—though it certainly was that as well.¹⁷⁸ Rather, the contest over the periphery also quickly developed into what political scientists call a contest of resolve, in this case between Rome and Antiochus, a contest conducted almost totally in public.¹⁷⁹ And it is disturbing that as the number of diplomatic interactions increased, as the contest of resolve between Rome and Antiochus continued, the harsher the tone of the interactions became.¹⁸⁰

This public contest of resolve was caused primarily by the uncertain hierarchy of power and status in a system of states that had undergone severe disruption since 207, a system that was now emerging both in a new form as well as on a new, Mediterranean-wide scale. Interviews between Roman representatives and Antiochus or his envoys failed down to 193 to clarify the boundaries of power between the two states, or to resolve the issue of hierarchy.¹⁸¹

The problem was that Antiochus's territorial claims were rapidly ex-

176. See the pioneering and insightful analysis of this phenomenon in Lowes Dickenson 1926: chap. I (esp. 5–12).

177. Sometime around 200, Antiochus not only was styling himself Antiochus the Great (*Μέγας*) but had also taken the traditional title of the Achaemenid emperors, “Great King” (*βασιλεὺς μέγας*): see discussion and evidence in Ma 2002: 272–77. Polybius on the reasons for the failed negotiations between the Seleucids and Ptolemies in 218/217: see above, chap. 4, text at n. 83.

178. Ma 2002: 97–102 (explicitly discounting Realist political-science paradigms in favor of cultural history and “clashing discourses”).

179. On contests of resolve and their prevalence in antiquity, see above, chap. 3, text at n. 105.

180. See Livy 35.16.7–17.2, the ugly scene at the negotiations at Ephesus in summer 193 (from Polybian material: Briscoe 1981: 2 and 162).

181. For such causation of conflict, see Gilpin 1988: 592. Again, for Derow (2003: 64) this complex situation resolves itself into the statement that even before the end of the war against Macedon in 196, “the Romans had had Antiochus in their sights.”

panding, and the Romans wanted limits set on his behavior, but he was unwilling to accede to them, in part because Roman demands impinged on his own expanding ambitions, based on talents that had previously led him to spectacular success, and in part because demands in themselves raised the crucial issue of status. Similarly, despite Antiochus's pressure, the Romans were unwilling to forgo their own claims, both in European Greece and in western Asia Minor. The resulting situation of unstable bipolarity thus could not last long. What followed was soon another systemwide hegemonic war to determine the new leadership and structure of the disrupted system.¹⁸²

Antiochus's conquests in Thrace continued in 195, and the senatorial commission of ten men returned from Greece to Rome in 195 with frightening reports of the scale of his army and navy.¹⁸³ Complicating the situation was the fact that although the concrete interests of Rome were now geographically much broader than they had been before 200, including European Greece as well as Pergamum and Rhodes (and Egypt proper), after 194 those interests were not backed by the presence of any Roman soldiers. Mommsen rightly (once again) recognized the point long ago: it was a major strategic error for the Senate to withdraw from Greece when relations with Antiochus were unsettled and the king was advancing westward. It sent the wrong message. The temptation presented by a European Greece freed from the direct military domination (and protection) of both Macedon and Rome proved too much for Antiochus the Great to resist: "The war with Antiochus would not have occurred at all except for the Roman political mistake of the 'Freeing of Greece,' and the war would have remained without major danger to Rome except for the military mistake of the decision to withdraw Roman troops from the great Macedon fortresses in European Greece—which formed a frontier against him."¹⁸⁴

It is true that there were groups within the Senate, led especially by Scipio Africanus, who argued that a strong Roman military presence in European Greece was the best way to deal with the threat of Antiochus. What is remarkable is that the *auctoritas* even of the conqueror of Han-

182. Emphasizing the complex and difficult nature of the diplomatic standoff: Grainger 2002: chaps. 4–9.

183. Seleucid conquests in Thrace: see Gruen 1984: 624–25 (with sources). The alarming report on the scale of Seleucid armed forces by the senatorial commission: Livy 33.44.6–9, cf. 33.43.6 and 34.33.12.

184. Mommsen 1903: 721; cf. also the comments of Raditsa 1972: 564–65, and Grainger 2002: 127.

nibal was not enough to convince the Senate to maintain troops in Greece. The position taken by the Roman commander in Greece, T. Quinctius Flaminius, prevailed instead: he and his supporters argued that the best buffer against Antiochus would be the goodwill of the European Greek states toward Rome, and that this goodwill was best gained by the Romans fulfilling their promise of the “Freedom of the Greeks” in the most obvious manner—by the withdrawal of their army back to Italy.¹⁸⁵

That this position won the day in the Senate in spring 194 indicates that senatorial goals in Greece even in the mid-190s remained highly limited. The belief among the *Patres* was evidently that an informal sphere of influence in European Greece was sufficient for their purposes—though this did not involve any Roman presence in Greece, let alone direct control or exploitation. On the other hand, their policy clearly did aim at the exclusion from Greece of the influence of any other great power. Further, there is no doubt that despite the total withdrawal of their military forces, the Romans intended that their wishes in Greece would still be obeyed—whenever, that is, the Senate had such wishes to declare. Flaminius made that perfectly clear in his farewell addresses to various Greek governmental elites as the Romans were departing, speaking to them like a father (Liv. 34.49.1–50.1).¹⁸⁶

Yet the Roman withdrawal of their armies is simultaneously an indication that future senatorial wishes would likely be limited in scope and would occur only sporadically. Further, it is striking that the decision to withdraw, made as Antiochus was advancing westward into Thrace (he was probably active there again in summer 194),¹⁸⁷ was taken by the very men who had fought the Hannibalic War, men who in the 190s were the senior makers of opinion in the Senate—and that the decision was made even though it was known at Rome that Hannibal himself, now a refugee from Carthage, had joined Antiochus’s court.¹⁸⁸ Even more strikingly, the decision to withdraw was taken at a time when there was a

185. Discussion, with sources: Eckstein 1987: 308–15. Flaminius had previously warned the Senate of the approach of Antiochus several times; if he now urged withdrawal, it was probably both because he sincerely believed that Greek goodwill would make for an effective buffer zone and because of his personal desire for the *gloria* of bringing the army home from Greece after the victory over Philip.

186. Discussion in Eckstein 1987: 311.

187. Arguments in Grainger 1996: 340.

188. See the comments of Grainger 2002: 123. Hannibal came to the Great King in late summer 195, at Ephesus in Ionia, after Antiochus’s second campaign in Thrace: *ibid.* 121–22. Roman tradition later had it that Hannibal’s influence was decisive in pushing Antiochus toward war with Rome: see Liv. 33.49.8—no doubt exaggerated, but revealing of Roman suspicions.

substantial Seleucid army stationed on the European side of the Hellespont, in Thrace, protecting Antiochus's recent conquests there. We know that the issue of the large Seleucid military presence in Thrace was of serious concern to at least some prominent men in the Senate (Livy 34.33.12: P. Villius Tappulus, consul 199, a man with experience in Greece)—and yet the decision still went forward.¹⁸⁹ Perhaps the decision reflects the great personal influence of Flamininus, backed by his prestige as the conqueror of Philip V; but whatever the motives behind it, there is no way one can construe this Roman action as that of an exceptionally aggressive state—either in modern or especially in ancient terms.

In fact the senatorial decision of 194 turned out to be a foolish decision, which greatly destabilized the Aegean region because it presented Antiochus the Great with what appeared to him to be a power vacuum precisely in the region where his own expanding empire was in increasing contact with the new Roman sphere of influence in European Greece.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, this power vacuum in the Aegean occurred within a general condition at the system level that was a dangerously unstable bipolarity, a “zero-sum” situation, where one side's gain in territory, power, or influence was now the other side's loss. The situation was additionally complicated by the fact that one great power (Rome) appeared to be sending what the other took to be mixed signals about intentions and interests: diplomatic assertiveness was combined with military withdrawal. Such unstable structural situations, in and of themselves, make systemwide hegemonic war likely.¹⁹¹ The militaristic cultures of both great powers and their socialization toward employment of state violence as a normal means of settling conflicts of interest were additional factors conducive to war—as was the publicly expressed diplomatic recalcitrance of both sides. Further, although it is true that the Roman Senate occasionally meddled somewhat in the Seleucid space created by Antiochus on the western coast of Asia Minor (at Lampsacus, Smyrna, and Alexandria Troas), it is simultaneously true that Antiochus was engaged in extensive military operations in what he knew the Senate claimed as the Roman space in European Greece (namely by extending his military power eastward through Thrace). Finally, and crucially, it was highly aggressive action on the part of Antiochus, not Rome—his invasion of

189. Grainger (2002: 125) suggests that the Seleucid army in Thrace numbered 20,000 men.

190. Grainger 2002: 127; cf. Mommsen 1903: 721.

191. Cf. Gilpin 1998: 593 and 596.

central Greece in late 192—that disrupted the delicate geopolitical equilibrium.

Yet if a catalytic lesser event or actor was necessary to turn probable systemwide war into actual systemwide war, those catalysts also were not wanting.¹⁹² The specific catalysts for the clash of the great powers were provided, as we have seen so often in this study, by fearful or discontented secondary powers. On one side was Eumenes II, the new king of Pergamum. He ruled a domain that was suddenly losing influence and power, hard pressed by new Seleucid conquests both to the north and to the south: as Eumenes later told the Senate, he faced a trial by fire such as his father had never had to face (Polyb. 21.20.6–7). To save his kingdom from eventual destruction by Antiochus, Eumenes stirred up complaints to Rome about Antiochus's aggressions (winter 194/193).¹⁹³ On the other side were the Aetolians, who—as they had made abundantly clear—were profoundly dissatisfied with the relatively small territorial gains they had been allowed under Flamininus's settlement of 196. Just as Eumenes worked on the Romans, emphasizing the threat that Antiochus posed to the order in the East they had sought to create, so the Aetolians began to work on Antiochus, fostering his ambitions to come to Greece and establish a new structure of relations from which they themselves would be great beneficiaries. Such conduct by secondary states was a natural process of the interstate anarchy.¹⁹⁴

Like the envoys from Eumenes, envoys from Antiochus came to Rome that winter of 194/193 as well. They were confronted—in private negotiations and then publicly—with a demand from T. Quinctius Flaminius and the members of the old senatorial commission of 196, including the crusty P. Sulpicius Galba, who had led the political fight for war with Philip in 200: the king's forces were to leave Europe (i.e., Thrace). The demand was backed by threats to intervene in Asia Minor if Antiochus did not respond, although also with an offer to leave the king a

192. Catalytic events or actors as necessary for initiation of systemwide war: Gilpin 596–97; cf. now Lebow 2001: 614.

193. On Eumenes' role in exacerbating conflict between Rome and Antiochus, see McShane 1964: 131–43; Grainger 2002: 155 and 164. Seriousness of Antiochus's threat to Pergamum: McShane 1964: 134–35; Grainger 2002: 155. As Eumenes evidently said to the Roman envoys of 193, he would rather be the ally of the Romans than be reduced to a subordinated creature of Antiochus (Livy 35.13.9, from Polybius; Briscoe 1981: 165). Compare the similar attitude of the Apulians, in contrasting the choice they faced between Rome and the Samnites: see Livy 9.13.6, cf. above, chap. 5, text at n. 116.

194. On the destructive role of the secondary states in bringing on the crisis of late 192, see Grainger 2002: 163–64.

relatively free hand there if he agreed to leave Europe.¹⁹⁵ Talks at Rome were inconclusive. A Roman embassy was sent to Asia the following summer (193). The embassy first met with King Eumenes at Pergamum—who again warned of Antiochus's ambitions, and urged war (Livy 35.13.6–10). Talks with Antiochus followed, and then more talks with his representatives—but again they led nowhere.¹⁹⁶

In early 192 Antiochus was back in Thrace with an army—extending his dominions westward into Europe; it was probably now that the king conquered the important cities of Aenus and Maronea on the Thracian coast, which had been freed by Rome from Philip.¹⁹⁷ It is worth emphasis that Antiochus campaigned in Thrace in 192 well knowing that this region had become one of the strongest areas of contention between himself and Rome. The alarming report of Antiochus's campaign came to Rome through a Pergamene envoy—the brother of Eumenes.¹⁹⁸

Meanwhile, the governing elite of the Aetolian League, profoundly dissatisfied with the limited territorial expansion granted the league by Flamininus in 196 (and perhaps also because the Aetolian leaders felt that the opinions of the Aetolians were not accorded the respect they deserved in Roman councils as allies now in two wars against Macedon), came to believe that the league should take revenge for the slights they thought Aetolia had suffered at Roman hands—and that the league would gain far more power and prestige if it became the leading ally in a new and Seleucid-imposed restructuring of European Greece. Aetolian envoys went to Antiochus's court, asking for his help and proclaiming that he would be welcomed in European Greece as a liberator. At first there was no substantive response (Livy 35.13.1). But the Aetolians were persistent, and when Thoas, the Aetolian *stratēgos* of 193/192, came personally to Antiochus to ask for support, the king found the opportunity impossible

195. See Gruen 1984: 626–27. This is the fourth Roman attempt to set a boundary to Antiochus's behavior. The tougher Roman line on withdrawal of bases in Europe may also have been provoked by the presence of Hannibal as a military advisor at Antiochus's court: cf. Livy 33.49.1–8; App. Syr. 4.

196. Gruen (1984: 629–30) is far too sanguine about the outcome of these conferences; and Grainger (2002: 160–161, cf. 165) wrongly sees Antiochus as very conciliatory. In fact, there were no important concessions offered by either side at these meetings. This is true even if one believes the minor concessions in App. Syr. 12 over the far grimmer version of events in Livy, which is based on Polybian material (see Briscoe 1981: 1 and 162). And as even Grainger admits (161) Antiochus at these meetings kept completely off the table the key question of his large army and province in Europe, in Thrace.

197. Livy 35.23.10; cf. 35.35.7 and 37.60.7. Historicity of the campaign: Briscoe 1983: 32–33, 179, and 395; Grainger 1996.

198. This conduct of Antiochus undermines the thesis of Grainger (2002: 163) that Antiochus was attempting to be conciliatory (as he indirectly admits: 187).

to resist, despite the fact that Rome had warned him away from Europe. In spring 192 Antiochus's minister Menippus proclaimed to the Aetolian Assembly the king's vast wealth and military power, and promised him as a true champion of Greek liberty (*libertas*: Livy 35.32.11). The Aetolian Assembly responded by passing a decree proclaiming Antiochus the liberator of Greece and the arbiter of the quarrels between Aetolia and Rome. Antiochus's territorial realm as well as his sphere of political influence now extended much farther even than that of the great Seleucus I, founder of the dynasty: Thrace was his province, and with Aetolia as his ally his power now extended all the way from Afghanistan to the Adriatic.

The Aetolian decree of spring 192 was not only a challenge but an insult to Rome—for, like all ancient great powers, the Republic never accepted an outside arbitrator in its quarrels with other states.¹⁹⁹ T. Quinctius Flamininus, who was already in Greece with a Roman diplomatic delegation to try to shore up political support in the face of the threatening situation from the East, protested to the Aetolians that as allies of Rome they should bring any grievances to the Senate; but (so we are told) the response of the Aetolian *stratēgos* Damocritus was that he would dictate peace on the banks of the Tiber.²⁰⁰

That summer of 192, the Aetolians successfully brought the city of Demetrias into the league. It was a port city and a great naval base, one of Philip's former Three Fetters of Greece. The move was a serious disruption of Flamininus's settlement of 196—according to which Demetrias was to be an independent state—and yet the only Roman response to the Aetolian coup was an attempt by the ex-consul P. Villius Tappulus, one of the ambassadors with Flamininus, to convince the people of Demetrias to reconsider. They rejected him as he spoke to them from a ship in the harbor (Livy 35.39.3–8)—a humiliating scene. Moreover, this tepid Roman response occurred after the Aetolians had already tried to take by force the city of Chalcis, seventy miles south of Demetrias, and the second of the Fetters of Greece (Livy 35.37.4–38.14). Similarly, the Aetolians in summer 192 assassinated King Nabis of Sparta and attempted to seize that city as well. But the Aetolian coup at Sparta led to a military response from the Achaean League: the *stratēgos* Philopoemen occupied the city and brought it into the league. Again, this action occurred despite the fact that by the Roman peace settlement with Sparta

199. See Eckstein 1988, and now the comments of Grainger 2002: 177–79.

200. Livy 35.33.3–10; App. Syr. 21; Zon. 9.19. No reason to reject the story: Briscoe 1981: 194.

in 195 the city was to remain fully independent. It is clear that Flamininus opposed the Achaean move, but the Achaeans rejected him (Livy 35.25.5). Both of these actions indicated that the structure of interstate relations established by the Romans in Greece was cracking apart from several directions at once. Yet the only responses apparent were diplomatic protests from the Roman side—once again, actions that look confused rather than aggressive. John Grainger may well be correct, then, that it is not merely the Roman military withdrawal of spring 194, as important as that was, that sent the wrong message to Antiochus. The lack of immediate and strong Roman responses to the events of summer 192—as more than one Greek state reverted to its traditional expansionist tendencies, disrupting the situation the Senate had established and proclaimed satisfactory—may have reinforced that wrong message.²⁰¹

In the autumn envoys from Aetolia came again to Antiochus in northwestern Asia Minor, where he was putting some sort of pressure on the cities there that had previously sought Roman protection (Livy 35.42.3). The Aetolians brought the news that Demetrias on the Aegean coast of Greece had now voluntarily entered the Aetolian League. It was a demonstration both of Aetolian popularity and of widespread distrust of the Romans among the Greeks—and perhaps, conversely, of the Romans' lack of will. Antiochus's response was military: he crossed the Aegean personally with an army, and landed at Demetrias. The decision appears spur-of-the-moment, and Antiochus's original forces were relatively small. They were enough, however, so that over the course of winter 192/191 most of Thessaly came over to his cause, as well as states as far west as Athamania and Acarnania on the Adriatic. The Aetolian League elected him its *stratēgos* for 192/191. The system set up in Greece by Rome in 196 had now fallen completely apart—although both Philip V in the north and the Achaean League in the south would eventually side with the Republic against the Great King.²⁰²

The Aetolians' action in inciting Antiochus to come to Greece was, of course, yet another example of that typical ancient process of empire by invitation. Yet the decision to invade Greece was the king's alone: it was an act of will to dominate his environment, and a demonstration in the most overt way possible of his refusal to be limited by Roman demands

201. See Grainger 2002: 186–187 and 191.

202. On the widespread impact of Antiochus's invasion, see Deininger 1971: 78–116. Antiochus's original forces were perhaps not nearly as small—10,000 infantry—as some scholars have thought: see the comments of Bar-Kochva 1976: 15–17, and Briscoe 1983: 207.

that he stay away from Europe. He could have said no to the Aetolian inducements of 193 and 192 to intervene in European Greece—just as the Roman Senate could have refused the pleas of the Greek embassies of 200 to intervene east of the Adriatic. And if Antiochus had refused the Aetolians, then the possibility of the establishment of an eventual stable bipolar relationship with Rome cannot be ruled out, with untold social, cultural, economic, and political consequences for the history of the ancient Mediterranean. But—like the Roman decision of 200—the king’s decision of 192 was not exceptional in his world: the pressures of culture, and the constraints and inducements imposed by a harsh interstate system, pushed Antiochus in 192 not to refuse the Aetolians, just as they had pushed the Senate in 200 not to refuse the Greek envoys.

It appears that almost simultaneously with Antiochus’s landing in Greece (November 192), the Senate and people of Rome formally declared war on both the Aetolians and the Great King.²⁰³ The declaration of war was not a response to Antiochus’s landing at Demetrias (which could not yet have been known at Rome); the wording of the declaration refers to the actions of the Aetolians at both Demetrias and Chalcis, and to their invitation to Antiochus to come to Europe for the purpose of “making war on the Romans” (Livy 36.1.5–6). Rumors of an invasion of Italy by Antiochus had already been rife at Rome the previous winter (35.23.2); and the Senate had been hearing bad reports from Greece all summer. Here, then, was the *Patres*’ response.²⁰⁴ Indeed, already in September or October the Senate had ordered a large force under the praetor M. Baebius Tamphilus across the Adriatic to Apollonia—the first energetic reaction to the deteriorating situation in Greece all summer. Perhaps if Antiochus had known of the sending of Baebius’s force, he would not have come to Greece at all (although Apollonia was itself still far from the Aegean)—but of course he did not know. It is yet another example of the impact of the mutual opacity between ancient states, of poor communications, and of decisions made on the basis of poor information. Thus came the final clash between the two greatest powers still left standing at the climax of the Hellenistic age, one power emerging from the eastern periphery of the Hellenistic world, one from

203. The solar November date may have coincided with March 15 on the Roman calendar, so out of line was that calendar with the solar year; if so, the Senate had deferred decision until the entry of the new consuls into office.

204. Thus there is little to be said in support of the thesis of Derow (2003: 64) that the timing of the declaration of war shows that the war had nothing to do with aggressive moves on Antiochus’s part.

the western periphery.²⁰⁵ The resources available to each of these antagonists were far greater than for most states in antiquity, and the result was a true hegemonic war to establish the leadership for the new inter-state structure that was emerging in the Mediterranean.

Antiochus's landing in Greece led at first to Roman fears (once again) that the Great King was about to invade Italy itself—backed by Hannibal as one of his generals. Since we know the final outcome of this war was a Roman victory, the fears appear ludicrous to us; and some scholars suspect this is simply Roman propaganda.²⁰⁶ But the Roman government engaged in serious defensive action at the time. The praetor A. Atilius Serranus, originally slated for command in Spain, was instead given Bruttium to guard, with two legions; the praetor Baebius, instead of going to Spain as well, was sent instead (as we have seen) with a large force to the west coast of Greece; a naval squadron was sent specially to guard Sicily from invasion, and a special emergency force of two legions was mobilized for service there.²⁰⁷ In spring 191 the defensive measures continued: the praetor A. Cornelius Mammula was given an army to guard the Italian coast from Tarentum to Brundisium, while a second praetor was sent to Sicily, in order to divide the command of naval and land forces for greater efficiency. One must understand that these were important and costly state actions—not propaganda.²⁰⁸ We must remember (once again) that the Romans lived in the shadow of Hannibal's invasion (and indeed of Hannibal himself, who was serving with Antiochus). They lived, too, in the shadow of Alexander the Great, who had shown that it was possible for a single political entity to annihilate the independence of all other polities—Alexander, of whom Antiochus the Great had proclaimed himself the heir.

The total Roman forces mobilized for the expedition to Greece were large (50,000 infantry; 75 quinquiremes).²⁰⁹ As in the war against Philip V that started in 200, however, the Romans were aided by numerous important Greek polities: Pergamum and Rhodes, Macedon and the Achaean

205. The overview of Liska 1978: 12–14.

206. The fact of Antiochus's invasion of Greece is downplayed by Harris 1979: 220 and 223; cf. Mandell 1991; Derow 2003: 64. Roman fear of Antiochus is discounted, and the strong tradition on it disbelieved (Harris 1979: 221–23). Why a tradition stressing Roman fear as a justification for military action should have developed in a society that (allegedly) unashamedly celebrated bellicosity and aggression is not explained.

207. Discussion in Siebert 1995: 243.

208. See *ibid.* 243–44 (with sources). Earlier: Will 1982: 172; cf. Badian 1964: 117.

209. As Grainger points out (2002: 211), the war effort in the East necessitated not sending reinforcements out to Spain, and halving the size of the Roman army fighting in northern Italy against the Celts (see Livy 36.2.6–3.1).

League, many others. Some no doubt acted from fear of the Romans; some no doubt feared both great powers; but others (especially Pergamum) primarily feared Antiochus.²¹⁰ Thus emerged a Mediterranean-wide hegemonic war—fought on land and sea, in Europe and then in Asia Minor, a war in which most states in the eastern Mediterranean (and states as far away as Carthage in the western Mediterranean) participated in one way or another. This was the war that definitively established the Republic as the arbiter of geopolitics in the East—and as the patron of an artificial balance of power restored after the disruptive energies of Philip and Antiochus.

In this new, artificial balance of power, established in 188, several friends of Rome received substantial territorial rewards: the Achaean League was allowed a free hand to conquer the entire Peloponnese, while Pergamum and Rhodes gained large swaths of territory in Asia Minor.²¹¹ On the other hand, Philip V—who fought on Rome's side in Europe and conquered back a series of Macedonian holdings—was eventually forced to free most of them when these polities protested to Rome (laying the seeds for future trouble between Rome and Macedon). The Aetolian League was defeated, and its future policies made directly subject to Roman approval. Antiochus himself had to pay an enormous war indemnity to Rome (as well as a large war indemnity to Pergamum); the western boundaries of his dominions were placed at the Taurus Range in eastern Asia Minor—very far from Rome—and his army forbidden to cross the mountains, his war fleet limited to almost nothing.

Thus the Pergamenes, Rhodians, and Achaeans (as well as the Ptolemies) had survived the power-transition crisis and the subsequent hegemonic wars out of which the new interstate system emerged; they had even profited substantially in terms of local power. But although in 188 Roman military forces were once again totally withdrawn back to Italy (not to return for almost twenty years), it was the victorious Romans who now dictated the new interstate structure, and were its leaders and formidable patrons.²¹²

210. The Rhodian navy made crucial contributions to two great victories over Antiochus's formidable navy (190): see Berthold 1984: 157–62 (with sources); Pergamene troops were crucial in the central Roman victory over Antiochus's army at Magnesia in 189: see McShane 1964: 145–46 (with sources).

211. Partly this was Roman gratitude (see Polyb. 21.18–24); partly, perhaps, the idea was a permanent balance and shield against the Seleucids.

212. On the peace settlement of 188, see conveniently Errington 1972: 179–95. Macedon: Errington 1990: 205–7. Antiochus's navy hugely reduced: Walbank 1979: 159–60 (with sources). The comment of Gruen (1984: 643) that the peace settlement established

CONCLUSION

Advocates of unit-attribute theory would argue not only that the truly decisive events in the great crisis of 202–200 B.C. in the Mediterranean (and the later crisis of 193–192 B.C.) took place in Rome, but also that an investigation into the internal history of Rome, into Roman cultural structures, into Roman politics, into Roman militarism and aggression will fundamentally suffice to explain the Roman interventions in the Greek East in 200 and 192. Advocates of an international-systems approach to these crises would, on the contrary, start from the premise that any analysis should take a broader view of the interstate world: the study of state expansion must be seen within the context of competing empires.²¹³ While underlining events at Rome, such an approach would also place decisive events in the Greek East, place emphasis on the profound power-transition crisis that began with the faltering and then the collapse of the power of the Ptolemaic regime, a power-transition crisis exacerbated from winter 203/202 by the alliance of Philip V and Antiochus III against the Ptolemies and the two kings' rapidly increasing power and increasingly aggressive actions—a systemic crisis that resulted finally in a hegemonic war among the Greek states that would, no matter what the specific outcome, create a new systemic structure with new system leaders.²¹⁴ The collapse of the Ptolemies and the subsequent actions of Philip and Antiochus led, in turn, to the sequence of embassies to Rome from frightened Greek polities. The Greek embassies did not provide merely an opportunity for the exercise of a continual aggression that was a uniquely pathological characteristic of Roman society. Rather, the arrival of the embassies was, in Lebow's terminology, a catalyst that changed thinking in the Senate, convincing the *Patres* that it was riskier for Rome to continue its long-standing lack of interest in the East than to attempt a powerful intervention there. A similar situation developed with regard to the Roman confrontation with Antiochus III in the 190s. The specific catalysts once again were provided by secondary states—especially the Aetolian appeals to Antiochus for intervention in Greece, but including also the Pergamene attempts to warn

Antiochus as “an associate in the enterprise to maintain Mediterranean concord” seems a naive formulation.

²¹³ For this political-science maxim, see Hyam 1999: 31–32; cf. in detail Abernethy 2000: chap. 9.

²¹⁴ See the contrasting positions elucidated (without political-science terminology) by Griffith 1935: 2.

and frighten Rome concerning Antiochus's intentions. At the level of the great powers, however, this was a clash between sternly competing expansive political entities, and the decisive action was taken by the Great King, when he invaded Greece in autumn 192.

An international-systems approach would argue further that in these crises there was nothing new. This was how the heavily militarized multipolar anarchy of the ancient Mediterranean states had functioned for several hundred years. It was a fiercely competitive environment unforgiving to the weak or the inadequate. Demosthenes, like Thucydides before him, proclaimed the interstate world a brutal multipolar competition that belonged to the strong: "All men have their rights conceded to them in proportion to the power at their disposal." A century and a half after this statement, nothing had changed.²¹⁵ The ferocious desire of polities for independence coexisted with constant interstate conflicts of interest, conflicts of interest that were real, and that led to constant warfare, conquest, and subordination; the ferocity of the competition is demonstrated by the many polities that were actually destroyed by enemies and rivals. These conditions were as true in the western Mediterranean as in the East, as true in the third century B.C. as in the fifth. The Roman Republic grew up amid the fierce city-state competition of Tyrrhenian Italy, and as Roman power expanded and the Romans entered or were drawn into successively larger interstate systems, the fierceness of competition did not abate, although the scale of warfare expanded—and the stakes remained as heavy.²¹⁶

None of this means that the Roman decisions of 200 and 192 B.C., with all the momentous consequences that followed, were absolutely determined by the general structure of interstate politics. No Realist theoretician argues that the individual actions of the governing elites of individual states are absolutely determined by the interstate structures that form their environment. Governing elites have agency, and there is significant room here especially for the impact of internal political culture (though Realists would also argue that the highly aggressive and security-minded aspects of ancient Mediterranean cultures are themselves in good part direct consequences of the stern pressures of the environment). Indeed,

215. Demosth. *Rhod.* 26; see also, of course, his castigation of alleged Athenian weakness in the face of the threat from Philip II of Macedon (e.g., 1 *Olynth.* 24).

216. The list of destroyed cities for fifth- and fourth-century Greece: above, chap. 3, n. 72; Greek examples from the Hellenistic period: above, chap. 4, text at nn. 86 and 87; Tyrrhenian Italy and Greek southern Italy: above, chap. 5, text at nn. 15 and 132. Carthaginian examples: above, chap. 5, text at n. 183, and chap. 6, text at n. 81.

we know that in 200 the Roman decision to intervene in the Greek East in the face of the profound power-transition crisis occurring there was a near-run thing. What Realist theoreticians do argue, however, is that the general structure of interstate politics puts constraints and limits upon state action, pushing governing elites toward certain types of decisions and away from other types of decisions. Thus the constraints deriving from the pressures of an anarchic and militarized multipolar system make it unlikely that in the face of a systemic crisis certain types of state decisions and actions—passive ones; peaceful ones; indifferent ones—will be taken, and more likely that aggressive and confrontational actions will be taken instead. The pressure toward aggressive and security-minded action is true as a general trend—though any one historical event cannot be predicted. This is more true the more cruel and competitive the system in which the state in question exists; and it is most true of decisions taken during a systemwide power-transition crisis, where pressures for decisive state action are high because the stakes are so high. In that sense, though again nothing at the level of events was theoretically predictable or certain, a very significant factor in the eventual Roman decisions to intervene in the Greek East in 200 in the face of the pact between Philip and Antiochus and again in 192 in the face of Antiochus's invasion of Greece must be seen to be the pressures from the brutal system in which Rome existed, a system that had taught the Romans many harsh lessons.

Roman success after the 330s was exceptional. But what differentiated the Roman Republic from its ferocious competitors was neither its intensely militaristic culture nor its constantly expanding definition of security as its own power expanded (including now preventive action against potential enemies), nor its increasingly large ambitions. Rome was indeed like this, and it is crucial to recognize that Rome was indeed like this. But this monograph has tried to show that most ancient states, including Hellenistic states, were also like this—in good part because of their adaptation to the pressures of the anarchic and militarized state-systems in which they were all forced to exist. But because Rome's brutal competitors for power and security were all like this, like the Romans in terms of militarism and aggressive diplomatic decision making, Roman militarism and aggressive decision making cannot be taken to be the crucial variables explaining Roman success.

What, then, explains Rome's exceptional success? Most ancient states were also fragile—even if powerful. Carthage was in many respects a normal city-state: it had large military and geopolitical ambitions, and had achieved much; but it also had limitations deriving from a relatively

limited citizen population. Hence the crisis with its own mercenary forces in 241–238. Tarentum, an earlier competitor with Rome, was similar: a normally aggressive and militaristic city-state within the anarchy, with large military and geopolitical ambitions in Italy, its power was limited by the size of its population, which was large for a city-state but—as it turned out—insufficient to meet its powerful ambitions. Even the (potentially) militarily strongest of the Hellenistic monarchies, that of the Seleucids, suffered sharp loss of territory in the 240s and 230s, beset by severe internal civil war that in turn encouraged external attacks on the Seleucid realm from several directions simultaneously: from the Ptolemies, the Antigonids, the Attalids, and the Parthians. And while the Ptolemaic dynastic regime possessed very large military and geopolitical ambitions of its own, it too was characterized by the internal structural fragility of any dynastic state—hence the multiple crises that engulfed it after 207, threatening to bring about its complete collapse, and encouraging attacks from the Antigonids and Seleucids (and, after 197, even from the Rhodians).²¹⁷ By contrast, Rome as it developed after 338 B.C. simply did not suffer from the fragilities that beset even the largest ancient states. It is this characteristic—not its intense militarism, not its expansionism, not its diplomatic aggressiveness, characteristics that it deeply shared with all of them—that sets Rome apart. It is this characteristic that permitted Rome not merely to survive in its exceptionally harsh environment but to prevail over it.

The intentions of Rome in foreign relations were little different from those of other states. But from the 330s Rome possessed, in the terminology of Raymond Aron, an enhanced capability in both the extent and the intensity of its mobilization of resources. All states, says Aron, face severe competition from other states; the degree of mobilization of resources of which a state is capable in this competition depends on the structure of its society.²¹⁸ Aron lists the factors affecting the mobilization of resources, and two of them are significant for us. First, he stresses the number of citizens in relation to noncitizens.²¹⁹ This was a weakness

217. On Carthage and Tarentum, see above, chap. 5; on the Ptolemies, see above, chap. 4; on the internal and external elements in the sharp Seleucid decline of the 240s and 230s, indicating both the fragility of Seleucid rule as well as the brutal nature of the anarchic system in which all these states lived—a system in which signs of weakness could lead to quick attack—see the emphatic remarks of Ma 2002: 47–50. On eventual Rhodian seizure of Ptolemaic possessions, see text above at n. 167.

218. Aron 1973: 51; reemphasized by Rosen 2003: 215–16.

219. Aron 1973: 51.

of most ancient city-states: they could mobilize a large percentage of their male citizens for war, but because the absolute number of citizens was itself relatively small as well as jealously guarded, the power of such city-states was restricted. Second, Aron stresses the solidarity of citizens in the face of the inevitable misfortunes of war.²²⁰ This was a serious weakness of the great Hellenistic monarchies: their large territorial base gave them the resources to mobilize large initial military forces, much larger than any normal city-state; but they could not endure heavy defeat and continue to fight on, because the stability of the regime depended above all on the military prestige of the monarch, and hence military misfortunes gravely weakened internal stability.²²¹ The weaknesses and fragility of Rome's rivals and potential rivals in terms of social mobilization in the face of war, combined with Rome's strengths in these aspects, are the keys to Roman success. These were crucial factors affecting the distribution of power first in Italy, then eventually throughout the Mediterranean.²²²

Kenneth Waltz describes the situation in a typically stark way: "States are alike in the tasks they face though not in their ability to perform them."²²³ The Roman state that emerged from the Latin War of 340–338 was unusually large for an ancient city-state in territorial size and population. But its true uniqueness lay in the entire basis of the state. Rome after 340–338 replaced ethnicity and geographical location as the basis of membership in the polity with a ladder of legal status-groups not tied to either ethnicity or geography: non-Roman allies (the *socii*), halfway citizens (the *cives sine suffragio*), full citizens (*cives*). And because the Romans were relatively generous in allowing non-Roman individuals and even (very occasionally) whole non-Roman polities to climb up this status hierarchy, Rome gained an enhanced capacity to win loyalty, or at least acquiescence. Of course, the power imbalance between Rome and any subordinate Italian polity was also enormous, and grew huger as more subordinate polities were added to the military resources the Senate had available.²²⁴ But the capacity for inclusion and integration was an equally

220. Ibid.

221. See chap. 4 above.

222. Varied state capacities to mobilize internal resources, and the impact on state power in the interstate world: Aron 1973: 46–47, 50–53, and 131. This type of analysis has recently been employed in a series of important historical case studies: Herf 1990; Christiansen 1996; Zacharia 1997; Friedberg 2000; Mearsheimer 2001.

223. Waltz 1979: 96.

224. See Strauss 1997: 134.

important factor in eventual Roman success. Just as the power imbalance between Rome and its subordinate states was far larger than the power imbalance between (say) Athens and her fifth-century allies, so the rewards Rome was culturally and politically capable of dispensing, in terms of imposed local peace but also in terms of the inclusion of local elites in the Roman state, were much greater than any state in Greece could ever offer.²²⁵ In 214 B.C. Philip V himself underlined inclusiveness as a great source of strength for Rome, stressing it in a letter to the city of Larissa in Thessaly, in which Philip sought to end the bitter hostility of the traditional citizenry to the new settlers he was attempting to place there. Philip had the insight to acknowledge this source of Roman power—yet he had a difficult time convincing his own subjects to pursue it.²²⁶ Inclusiveness, too, was the emperor Claudius's own analysis of the source of Roman power when, much later, he looked back on the historical development of the Roman state—but then, as Claudius emphasized, he was (like so many others at Rome) a descendant of immigrants himself.²²⁷

The Romans of the Middle Republic were certainly fearsome soldiers, but Roman armies could be beaten on any particular battlefield—and often they were, by the fearsome soldiery of their rivals. It was this system of inclusion, which was ultimately a diplomatic and political skill—and not Rome's stern militarism, which Rome shared with so many others—that made Rome potentially the most powerful state in the ancient Mediterranean in terms of numbers of citizens available. It was this skill at alliance management, a skill that was ultimately a diplomatic and political skill—and not Rome's stern militarism, which Rome shared with so many others—that made Rome potentially the most powerful Mediterranean state in terms of a large and stable alliance system of noncitizens beyond the citizen core (a citizen core that was already unusually large). Finally—and without being idealistic about Roman culture—one can point to the subtle flexibility in Roman identity. This flexibility allowed the transformation of the definition of "Roman" by gradually divorcing citizenship at least somewhat from either

225. Ibid.

226. *Syll.*³: 543, esp. lines 26–39; see Eckstein 2000: 872.

227. *ILS* 212; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1124—a speech of 48 A.D. advocating the admission of Romanized Gallic leaders from beyond the Alps into the Senate; see Griffin 1982. The emperor was a descendant of the Sabine Atta Clausus, who migrated with his dependents to Rome ca. 505 B.C.: see text above at n. 8.

ethnicity or location, and thus leading to a unique inclusiveness; perhaps paradoxically, it was thus a flexibility that helped make Rome so formidable.

Mommsen saw all these Roman advantages in resources long ago.²²⁸ Mommsen also saw that the causes of the Roman intervention in the Greek East in 200 B.C., a central event in ancient Mediterranean history, lay not so much in Roman internal characteristics as externally, in the crisis in the balance of power in the East initiated by the collapse of the Ptolemaic realm. This was, in political-science terms, a classic power-transition crisis, in which a major pillar of a preexisting interstate balance of power faltered in its systemic role, leading to a massive rearranging of the system. The faltering and then the collapse of Ptolemaic power from about 207 B.C. was accompanied by a corresponding shift in the distribution of power across the Hellenistic state-system—a sharp increase in the military and political power and ambitions of King Philip V of Macedon and of King Antiochus III the Great, the Seleucid emperor. The system transformation soon led to large-scale and widespread violence—by hegemonic war to determine the new interstate structure and its leadership. Antiochus and Philip evidently swore a pact to divide the Ptolemaic holdings between them, eliminating the Ptolemaic dynasty entirely (winter 203/202), and by 201 the entire Hellenistic East from Gaza to the Hellespont was at war.

In one way or another, this power-transition crisis was going to mean the replacement of the old tripolar balance of power with a new geopolitical order in the Greek Mediterranean; and, in one way or another, the new order would benefit the states with the most power (and the most energetic rulers). Perhaps Antigonid Macedon and the Seleucid empire would have created a bipolar system in the East; perhaps either Antigonid Macedon or the Seleucid empire would eventually have emerged as the head of a true unipolar system in the East. As it happened, the old tripolar balance of power was replaced instead by Roman hegemony, in the form of Roman patronage over an artificially restored balance of power in which the Ptolemies were saved. Roman patronage was exercised only indirectly; the appearance of Roman military forces east of the Adriatic was exceptional—the opposite to the stern situation that would have prevailed if the victor had been one or both of the Greek

228. Again, this is not to deny that part of Rome's hold on its allies also derived from their fear.

monarchies. That was the situation that tempted Antiochus III—the single most powerful individual in the world in the 190s B.C. other than the emperor of China—to invade European Greece at the behest of the Aetolians. Antiochus thereby ended any chance that the Mediterranean as a unified system would be a bipolar system. From about 188 B.C. (and even more strongly after 168 B.C.) the Mediterranean witnessed instead the emergence of a unified and unipolar system under Roman domination, stretching from Spain to Syria.²²⁹

This profound geopolitical transformation was achieved through massive violence; geopolitical transformations such as this usually are.²³⁰ A series of systemwide hegemonic wars led to the new interstate structure, under new leadership, while the regional subsystems in the West and the East themselves merged into one Mediterranean unity (Polybius's *symplokē*). The wars begun by Philip and Antiochus against the Ptolemies had engulfed the entire Greek Mediterranean, dragging in major secondary powers such as Pergamum and Rhodes. The Greek monarchs knew they were contesting for “control of everything,” in Polybius's phrase (5.101.10)—the leadership of the new interstate structure. Even so, one may doubt that Rome would have intervened in the Greek systemwide crisis except for the series of Greek appeals and warnings that the Senate received. This is because Roman involvement in the Greek world down to 200 B.C., and Rome's concrete interests there, had been minimal—though Roman suspicions of Greek power were well established. But the thesis in this chapter has been as Maurice Holleaux proposed seventy years ago: that the Greek envoys convinced the Roman Senate that important Roman interests were indeed caught up in the huge expansion of the power of Philip and Antiochus, and that it was better to act now, before the monarchs (or even an emerging single monarch) became a far more powerful threat. The Greek envoys convinced the Senate; the *Patres* were able, just barely, to convince the Roman people.

The result was the expansion of an already ongoing war, via the intervention of a hitherto peripheral power. Rome intervened militarily

229. As Polybius indicates, just as there had been a lag in the perception of the developing Mediterranean *symplokē* (interconnectedness), so that Philip and Antiochus operated after ca. 203 as if Rome did not exist (see above, chap. 4), so too there was a lag in the recognition of the situation of unipolarity: to many people, the situation did not become clear until after ca. 168 B.C. and the Roman destruction of the Antigonid kingdom combined with the Roman blocking of yet another Seleucid attempt to conquer Egypt (see Polyb. 1.1–4 and 29.21 and 27).

230. See Gilpin 1988.

against Macedon and diplomatically against Antiochus to restrain the imperial increase of both kings. This was certainly a coercive assertion of Roman power, though it was still different from an intent to enter a contest for “control of everything”—though that, in the end, was the result. To Polybius, writing fifty years later, Roman intervention sealed the permanent geopolitical unification of the western and eastern halves of the Mediterranean political world. But at the time Roman victory in the hard-fought war against Philip led merely to an unstable bipolar situation between Rome and Antiochus the Great. The Roman reordering of European Greece that followed the victory over Philip was soon followed by the Roman withdrawal of all troops back to Italy—a withdrawal that (as Mommsen again saw), rather than increasing international stability and the chance for peace in the East, instead greatly exacerbated the instability of the relationship with Antiochus, because it appeared to create a power vacuum in a crucial region. When the Aetolian League, a dissatisfied secondary power, appealed to Antiochus to replace Rome as the hegemon in European Greece, the Seleucid monarch answered affirmatively—as great powers in antiquity usually did. Antiochus’s invasion of Greece overturned many Roman arrangements there and led in turn to a new round of hegemonic war. Out of that war Rome eventually emerged as the unipolar power.

The story is a complex one, with a surprising ending. It is a story in which systemic pressures played a crucial role. Rome of the Middle Republic was a heavily militarized state; and the Romans of the Middle Republic possessed a stern willingness to use coercive diplomacy, to use force and violence against all other states, including subordinate states. That willingness is an internal unit attribute, and it should be emphasized in terms of causation—though it was a willingness that did not differentiate Rome from any other great power. One also needs to remember, however, that the Romans existed in an exceptionally competitive and cruel interstate system, a militarized multipolar anarchy that had prevailed for centuries; they had been socialized to the unforgiving ways of that system—and the harsh threats it contained; most recently, of course, had come the lesson of Hannibal’s invasion of Italy. The internal system that the Romans constructed after 340 B.C. provided Rome with an exceptional scale of potential military resources to be mobilized in Rome’s ferocious competition with other states in the system for power and security. The massive power-transition crisis that began after 207 B.C. in the Greek East led to a series of massively violent events, events that were, one may say, inherent in the nature of the power-transition crisis itself.

These included hegemonic war for control of the state system in the eastern half of the Mediterranean, and eventually included a hegemonic war for primacy in the Mediterranean world as a whole. Those events led to a situation in which the most powerful state among several potential hegemonies—an aggressive state among other aggressive states, an imperialist state among other imperialist states, and necessarily so, given the pressures of the surrounding environment—emerged the victor.

Roman Commanding Generals Killed in Battle with Foreign Enemies, 340s–140s B.C.

The list is presented in chronological order. The ancient evidence for each case is in Broughton 1951 (hence the italicized page numbers below). The list is restricted to consuls, praetors, and promagistrates—overall commanders of armies. Many other members of the Roman senatorial aristocracy, serving as officers, were of course killed in these battles.

1. P. Decius Mus, consul 340 (against Latins) 135
2. Q. Aulius Cerretaneus, magister equitum, 315 (against Samnites) 156
3. Ti. Minucius Augurinus, consul 305 (against Samnites) 166
4. P. Decius Mus, consul 295 (against Samnites, Etruscans, and Gauls) 177
5. L. Caecilius Metellus Denter, praetor 283 (against Gauls) 188
6. P. Decius Mus, consul 279 (against Pyrrhus of Epirus) 192
7. Q. Fabius Maximus Gurgus, consul 265 (against Etruscans) 201
8. C. Atilius Regulus, consul 225 (against Gauls) 230
9. C. Flaminius, consul 217 (against Hannibal and Gauls) 242
10. C. Centenius, propraetor 217 (against Hannibal) 245
11. L. Aemilius Paullus, consul 216 (against Hannibal) 247

Also at Cannae, commanding wings of the Roman army, died C. Servilius Geminus, consul 217 and proconsul 216; and M. Atilius Regulus, consul 217 and proconsul 216–250

12. L. Postumius Albinus, consul 215 (against Gauls) 253
13. Ti. Sempronius Gracchus, proconsul 212 (against Lucanians) 269
14. P. Cornelius Scipio, proconsul 211 (against Celtiberians) 274
15. Cn. Cornelius Scipio, proconsul 211 (against Celtiberians) 274
16. Cn. Fulvius Centumalus, proconsul 210 (against Hannibal) 280
17. L. Baebius Dives, praetor 189 (against Ligurians) 361
18. C. Atinius, propraeor 186 (against Lusitanians) 371
19. Q. Petilius Spurius, consul 176 (against Ligurians) 400
20. P. Iuventius Thalna, propraeor 148 (against Macedonians) 461
21. C. Vetilius, praetor 147 (against Lusitanians) 464

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